# Bajanaamā

## A Study of Early Indian Gramophone Records

MANUFACTURED UNDER THE PATENTS OF
THOMAS A. EDISON, at Orange, N. J. U. S. A.
MAY 8, 1888 JUL. 31, 1888 NOV. 27, 1888
DEC. 4, 1888 FEB. 5, 1889 APR. 2, 1889 NOV. 12, 1889 JUN. 17, 1890
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A. N. Sharma

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India, circa 1902- the lost war against British imperialists less than half a century away, the juggernaut of industrialization on a roll in the traditionally agrarian land, the sudden realization of a dormant nationhood in a society which for long had been happy to exist as a group of seemingly insular communities...and Indian music was being recorded in India. The first known recordings of Indian music though had already been made in 1899, in London, by Frederick William Gaisberg for The Gramophone Company Ltd.

**Soon, Indian music-classical and vernacular, Hindustani and Carnatic, vocal and instrumental- was being recorded and sold with a vengeance. Only, we have no archives to document this never before proliferation of music as a commodity of hard nosed commerce. The few records that have survived the ravages of time are scattered around the country-prized and cherished as family heirlooms or decaying further in some kabadi's godaam. It is a sad tale of neglect on the part of a society that boasts of a culture going back five thousand years.**

**Bajanaama is a tentative step towards documenting the history of Gramophone recordings of India. In the process, the author also highlights the interactions between the various players- the British administration, the Indian feudal rulers, the bais-pundits-ustads, the technical experts, the producers and distributors, the audience.**

**Bajanaama**: Baja, to most Indians, is a generic name for all musical instruments. As gramophones and gramophone records entered the plebian consciousness, they too were included in the wide baja clan. Naama (more correctly namah) is a Persian word that loosely means story and biography.
'Bajanaama' is meant to imply 'the story of the gramophone record'.

Supported by

# Bajanaamā

A Study of Early Indian Gramophone Records

# BAJANAAMA

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"
Instrumental
BAND
P. 4917
ব্যাণ্ড বাদ্য "কইব গো আজ নতুন কথা" সুর
From "KINNARI"
Played by
Simla Union Musical Club.
G.C.-8-10537
Record manufactured by THE GRAMOPHONE CO. LTD.

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**BAJANAAMA**
*A STUDY OF EARLY INDIAN GRAMOPHONE RECORDS*
by Amar Nath Sharma
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**First Edition**

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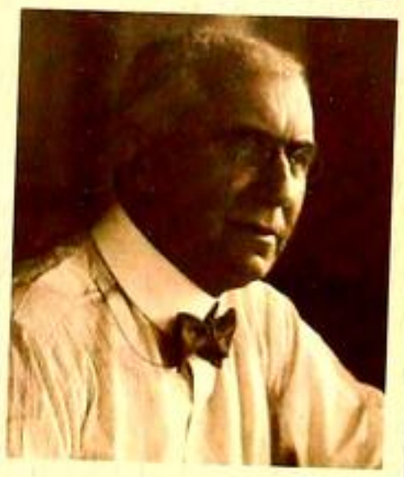
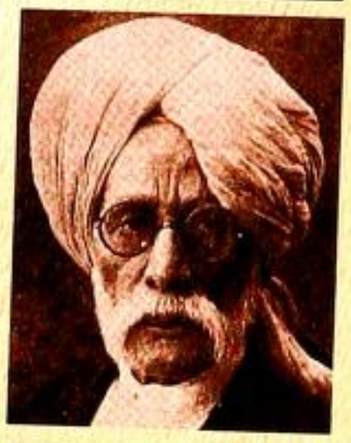
*Printed at*
*Thomson Press New Delhi.*

A
Photo - Discographic tribute to the
Flagbearers of Indian Music and
Recording Industry





# Bajanaamā

## A Study of Early Indian Gramophone Records

A. N. Sharma

**Kathachitra**
Prakashan
Lucknow-Mumbai

Pathe Phonograph, LUCCA 1900-1910

To my Wife Aabha
and children Ravi Shanker,
Aakriti, Anukriti

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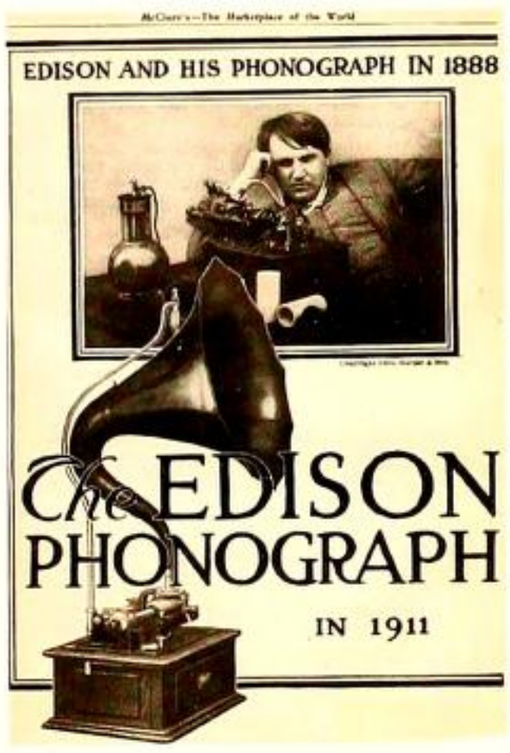


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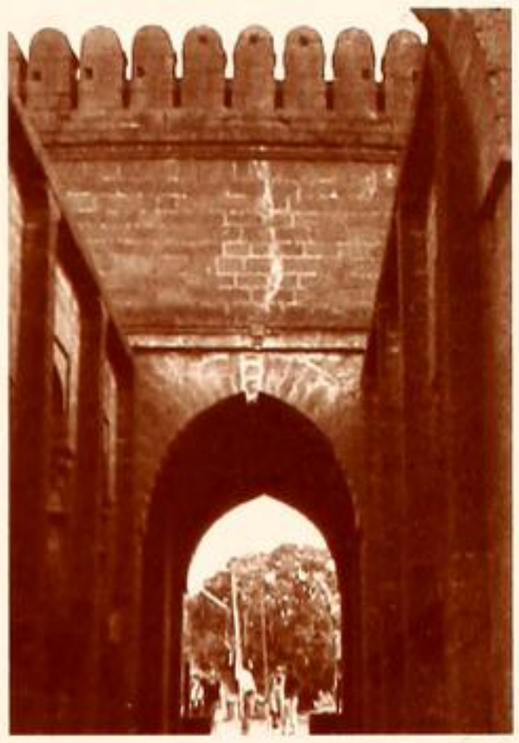


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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

India's is an ancient culture which is still evolving. Aware of its heritage at an abstract level, the Indian populace thinks nothing of a couple of centuries or so. For a culture that is used to counting in eons, centuries are small change. This, to an extent, explains our reluctance about creating and maintaining archives of our living heritage. But in no way does it condone the utter disregard for the recorded pieces of music from the twilight zone of Hindustani music.

The last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th were a crucial phase in the history of Indian classical music in general and of Hindustani music in particular. The fast changing socio-political scenario, the advent of the Industrial revolution via the great Indian Railway, the gradual disintegration of the old feudal order were some of the contributing factors which impacted the Hindustani music scenario. The sizable displacement of population post 1857 resulted in an unprecedented mixing of characteristics of the numerous schools of music.

The introduction of recording technology dictated some profound changes in the design of musical performances. Technology challenged the undisputed sovereignty of the Indian artist in a way that was unheard of. The three minute record forced the artist to wind up a raga within the time limit, and this is just one example. In retrospect, sound recording technology and the three minute record were also great boons since they allowed us an archive of our musical heritage or at least what was left of it. The sad part is, we managed to lose most of this archive. 'Bajanaama' is the first in a series of books aimed at providing a glimpse of the

initial two decades of the recording industry in India. It is a tentative first step in the direction of (God willing) creating an archive of the aural tradition of performing arts in India.

My friend A. N. Sharma has, over the years, collected and cherished old records that he loved to play for friends. Long, sometimes heated, discussions with him resulted in both of us agreeing' something has to be done'.

**Rakesh Manjul**

# FOREWORD

Our classics have declared music the fifth Veda, practitioners of music demi-gods and learning music, *sadhana.* So it is no coincidence that most of our sages and saint-poets have also been musicians or at least well versed in music. In India music and dance have long been believed to be mediums of reaching God.

With such philosophic and religious sanction, it is sad that we have allowed our rich musical heritage to slip through our fingers. In the last two hundred years alone we have lost a good number of *bandishes* and *cheezes*.

The last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th, was a significant phase in the journey of Indian music. With the dawn of a new century, many old traditions were on their way out. The institution of the so-called individual patron was one of them. The much maligned individual patron was often the last refuge of a vanishing style, a rare artist or a puritanical gharana. Seeing large profits in recordings of popular singers, recording majors sometimes ignored the real masters; on the other hand, many master artists refused to be recorded because either they saw it as an attempt to profanize what was essentially *sadhana* or esoteric practice or feared the consequent demystification of techniques exclusive to their particular schools or *gharanas*. The result is, a significant chunk of music never got recorded and in a fast changing scenario, was soon lost. The fragility of the initial records dealt another lethal blow to the documentation of music in India. For various reasons rare recorded pieces of music were lost.

Born in a family of practicing musicians, we have grown up listening to fascinating tales of magical singing, of moody divas who wouldn't sing a raga because it wasn't the prescribed time for singing that particular raga, of scholarly discussions on the true form of a raga, of long-winded feuds....but all that is past. Today, we stand at a cross-

roads. The traditional mode of music education, the guru-shishya parampara is on the decline, proliferation of information technology has shrunk the world and now an Ustad teaches his students across the world via video conferencing. In such a scenario, recorded pieces of old masters gain a new significance. They become the lost links of the long chain of tradition.

In this background, it is heartening to see a music lover and devoted record collector like A.N. Sharma make a valiant effort at documenting close-to-extinct fragments of musical performances from a very crucial phase in the history of the Indian sub-continent. As a collector of old records he focused on the first decade of recording in India which coincided with the first decade of the twentieth century. His search led him to some little known social and historical facts but that is another story. Sharma has painstakingly researched the histories of performers and schools of music and pieced a reliable narrative of both the history of the recording industry in India and music between the years 1860-1910.

This work will be of immense value to students and teachers of music and will provide a rare glimpse of an interesting phase in the long journey of music. We hope this effort continues.

Padma Bhushan Pt. Rajan Mishra
Padma Bhushan Pt. Sajan Mishra

New Delhi

# PREFACE

Years ago, browsing through a city market, I came across a heap of old 78 RPM gramophone records in a footpath shop. These magnificent documents of the history of recorded sound in the Indian sub-continent representing a bygone era lay there for sale on an 'as is, where is' basis. Folks walked by, oblivious of their existence, unaware of their historical value. Ordinarily, I too would have walked by, but my love for music pulled me towards these records. I rummaged through the pile for recordings of some known instrumentalists and vocalists of Hindustani classical music, and thus started my odyssey in this field. In due course, to my delight, I noticed that they were not only the repository of our musical legacy but also living documentation of the history of Indian music, the development of Indian dramatic arts and valuable documents of the political events that represented the freedom struggle of undivided India (that included her neighbors, Pakistan and Bangladesh).

Thus began my interest in records with a view to explore, understand and reconstruct the history of sound recording in the Indian sub-continent. In the process, I came across a lot of recorded discs, which were neither documented nor known. Many a times, my first encounter with a recorded disc of an artist, who to my knowledge, was not yet acknowledged as recorded, made me nostalgic and transported me to the past. Gradually, I began to feel that apart from updating the discography, we need to search for these records so they may be restored and preserved for the present and future generations of music lovers, ethnomusicologists and research scholars representing various fields. I realize it is a Herculean task and needs a battalion of dedicated enthusiasts but I can't resist the temptation to contribute my mite.

Here, I would like to remember the organizers of the Second All-India Music conference (held at Delhi during December, 1918), who for the first time conceived the idea and strongly advocated the need and importance of gramophone recordings of the renderings of living musicians. Shri.K.N.Shivpuri, Jt. Secretary, of the Conference expressed: "our workers have to hasten to preserve in a permanent form, by means e.g. of gramophone records, the existing art of singing the best specimens of which rest with aged artists whom the implacable hand of death may snatch away any moment. The finest

part of Indian Music is incapable of notations. The shades of notes, the graces, the gradations, the modulations, the gamakas, cannot be put down in SA...RE...GA...MA... They have to be learnt by the ear and must be learnt from the gramophone when the artists are dead and gone. Our workers have to arrange that these artists come together in Conference and consent to record their art. Their inborn prejudice and narrow-mindedness, which prevent them from parting with their art, must be conquered. They must be made to realize the superiority of a national interest over a private interest. And they must be made to see that the greater the spread of education in Music the greater will be demand for their services, that by being givers in the first instance they will certainly be takers in the next".

This conference also conceptualized the scheme for a National Academy of Music at New Delhi. Moving the resolution about the formation of the National Academy of Music, Pandit Bhatkhande emphasized on having "a faithful record of all the available masterpieces of our old composers in the possession of our first class experts for future guidance". He also informed the gathering,"In this connection let me mention that Rampur has in its possession the largest stock of Horis and Dhrupads of the famous Tan Sen School. I have already requested His Highness the Nawab Saheb our worthy President, to permit phonographic records of those ancient master pieces to be taken for the benefit of the country and I am glad to say that he has been graciously pleased to grant my request". However, due to paucity of funds this grand vision could not fructify as has been acknowledged by Prof. P.B.Joshi, a Member of the Provisional Committee appointed to carry out the objects of the National Academy of Music established at the Second All India Music Conference, Delhi in his prescient article "The Future of Hindustani Music".

Still, we come across a great and commendable effort of Late Thakur Nawab Ali Khan, the Talukdar of Akbarpur, Lucknow who collected and published notations of musical performances of some of the renowned musicians of that period in the form of the book 'Marifunnagmat'. The second part of this book published by Nawal Kishore Press of Lucknow in 1924, presented notations of the renderings of Late Ustad Mohammad Ali Khan, Late Ustad Nazir Khan of Moradabad, Late Ustad Mohammad Hussain Khan Luckhnawi, Late Ustad Abban Khan of Saharanpur, Late Ustad Raza Hussain Khan of Lucknow, Late Ustad Munne Khan of Lucknow, Late Ustad Amir Khan of Lucknow and Late Nawab Chamman Sahab of Rampur. As notations are only the skeleton and not the full body of the music, we perhaps missed the chance of getting recorded the great voices of some of the living legends of the time namely, Late Ustad Sadiq Ali Khan, Late Ustad Mohammad Ali Khan and many other greats of their calibre, even though the technology to do so was available in the country at that time.

'Bajanaama' is my tribute to the great visionaries Late Pandit Bhatkhandejee and Late Thakur Nawab Ali Khan Saheb. Discovering some of these early recordings of some of the great singers of this land, a humble effort to fulfil their dreams has been initiated: giving selected photographs of records, by blending them with biographies of performers or national leaders, and by portraying the socio-economic conditions of the period, a 3-D image of the subject has been attempted. I can neither claim any expertise on the subject nor conclude that the chapters contained in this book are complete, my hope and expectation is, they will stimulate many present day and future research scholars to take this work further. Preservation and study of these records will definitely unfold altogether a new era for many serious students of music and social sciences to concentrate on unexplored areas of ethno-musicology, ethno-dramatics, comparative musicology, documentation, Indian freedom movement and related aspects.

However, it is worth clarifying that the representations of the record labels here have been used for illustrative purposes only and no claim is made in regard to exclusivity, and the 'trademarks' shown on these labels are the proprietary interest of the producing company.

Further, my journey so far would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions made by many of my colleagues, kabariwalas and collectors of records, who have provided me with information on the subject, photographs of artists and records and encouragement. I convey my deep gratitude to them all and specially to Miss Praveen Talah, the then Chief Commissioner, Customs & Central Excise, Lucknow and later Member, UPSC; Shri Gyan Ranjan, Editor, PAHAL; Shri Rakesh Manjul (publisher of this book); Shri Rufus Rocky of Baroda; Shri Atul Dixit, Shri Arshad and Shri Rajesh Jain of Lucknow; Smt. Vidyaji, Librarian,SNA, Lucknow; Shri Akhilesh Mishra of Bhatkhande Sangeet Sansthan, Lucknow; Smt. Ranjana Roy (IGNCA-New Delhi); Smt. Anjula Saxena, New Delhi and Shri T.N.Venkateswaran of Mumbai. My special thanks to Shri Susheel Makharia and Shri Surendra Dalmiya for their association and encouragement. I am also thankful to Miss Nishtha Sharma of Kanpur for preparing notations of the gayaki of Ustad Khursheed Ali Khan of Lucknow, and also for providing invaluable assistance in clearing certain doubts.

I urge readers to send their suggestions to improve this work.

A. N. SHARMA
October 27, 2011
Mumbai

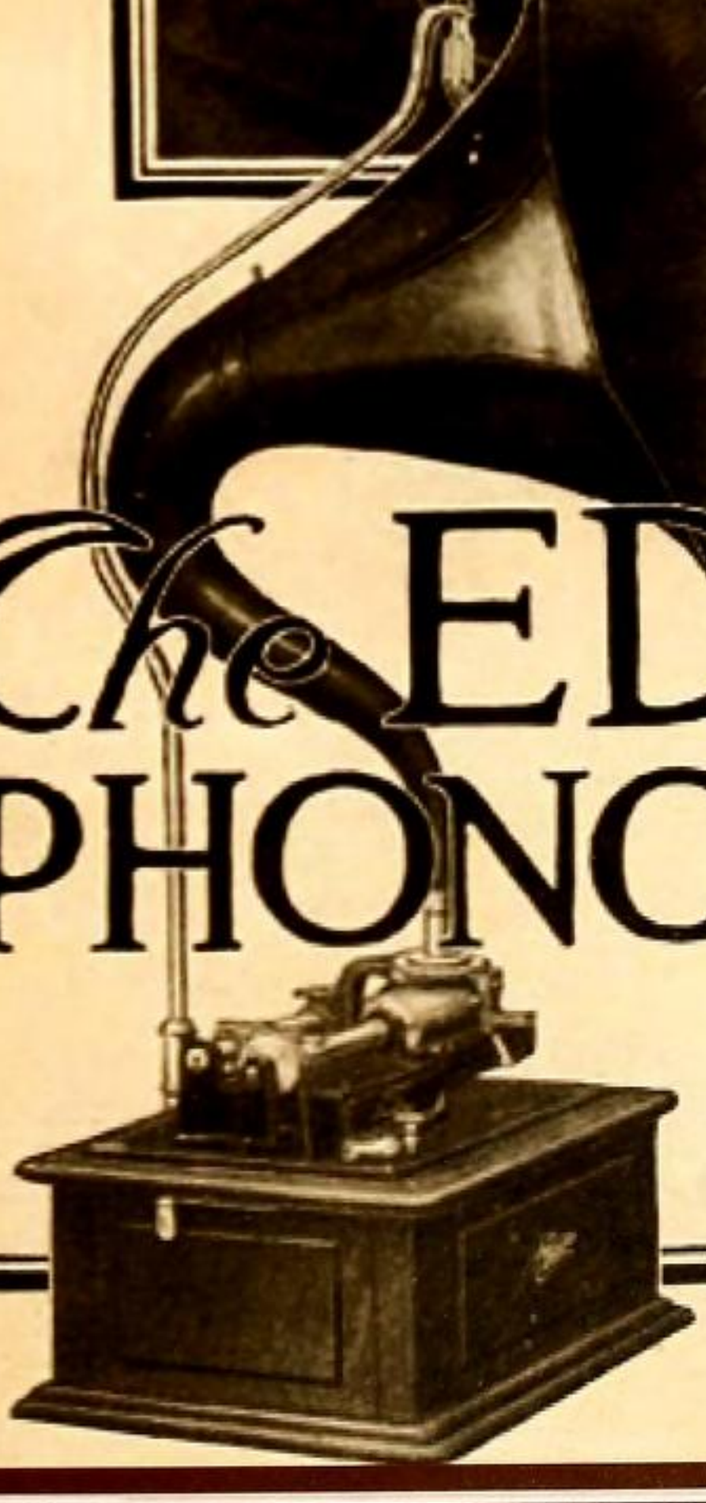
An Advertisement about the development
of Edison's Phonograph

# EDISON AND HIS PHONOGRAPH IN 1888

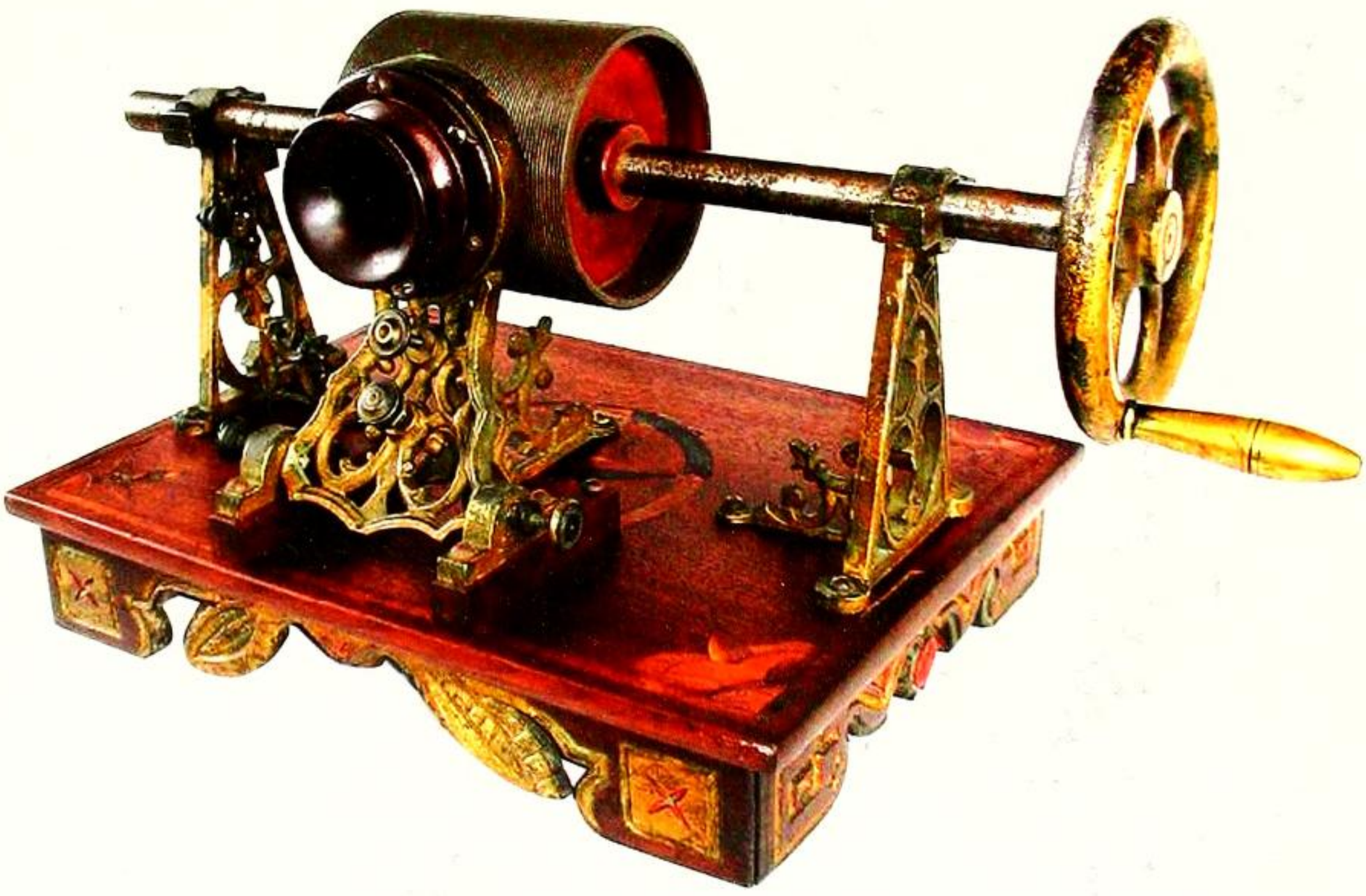
Copyright 1910, Harper & Bro.

# The EDISON PHONOGRAPH

IN 1911



ORIGINAL TINFOIL PHONOGRAPH
BY UNKNOWN AMERICAN CRAFTSMAN, 1878



# 1 PHONOGRAPH, GRAMOPHONE AND INDIA

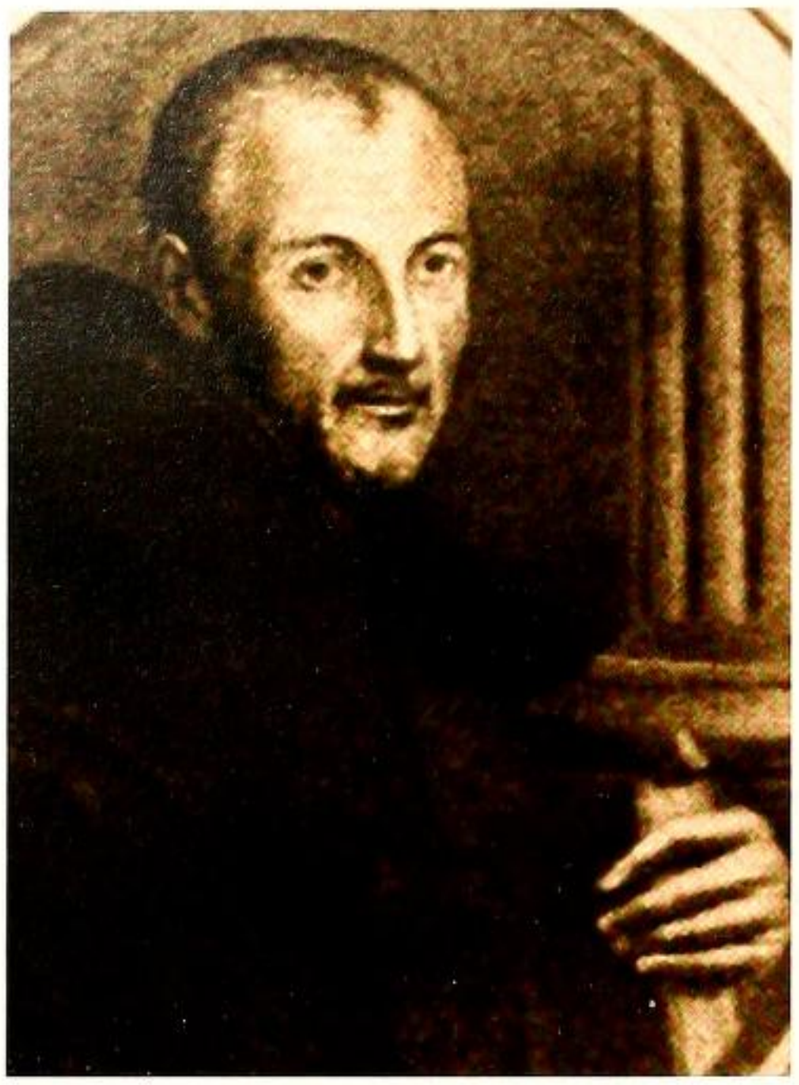
"In the beginning was no light, no good, no bad....." goes the Vedic description of the evolution of the Universe. Manu, the law-giver, proclaims-"Vak (utterance) brought forth the Universe..." As a matter of fact, mankind is unanimous on the point that the Universe came into existence because of sound. Perhaps the first encounter with the echo left a profound impact on man and this imbued to sound a uniquely mystic quality.

The idea of the conservation and reproduction of sound is a recurrent motif in all traditions, oral and written, great and little. The invention of the sound recording and reproducing device is one of the greatest milestones in the civilization process of mankind. Till a century and a half ago, it was a dream to record a voice and preserve it for posterity. Today's child's play was a matter of fantasy, the subject of fable. The non-availability of sound recording technology robbed mankind of the opportunity of recording and preserving voices of the many who shaped its history and destiny. Imagine having Christ's sermon on the mount, The Prophet's dialogue with his followers, Socrates' last words.....In the Indian context, we would have had Krishna preaching 'Bhagvat Geeta' to Arjuna, the discourses between Lord Rama and Laxman, the preachings of Lord Buddha, Lord Mahaveer, Guru Nanak Dev Ji and other great saints. Voices of kings and recordings of famous related events of their respective periods would have been undisputed evidences of history. In the field of music too the fabulous renderings of Swami Haridas, the great Tansen and Baiju Bawara would have been some of our prized possessions. We have none of these because prior to 1877, no sound recording and talking machinery were available.

Heron of Alexandria

As early as the third century B.C., Heron of Alexandria is said to have devised automata which would talk or emit cries of animals. The earliest such device, of which we have actual knowledge, is the one constructed by De Kempelein of Vienna in 1791. He published a description of it under the title "The Mechanism of Speech, Followed by a Description of Talking Machine". De Kempelein's device could be made to speak short sentences. The construction of a machine that would record the human

1- Mersenne
2-Thomas Young



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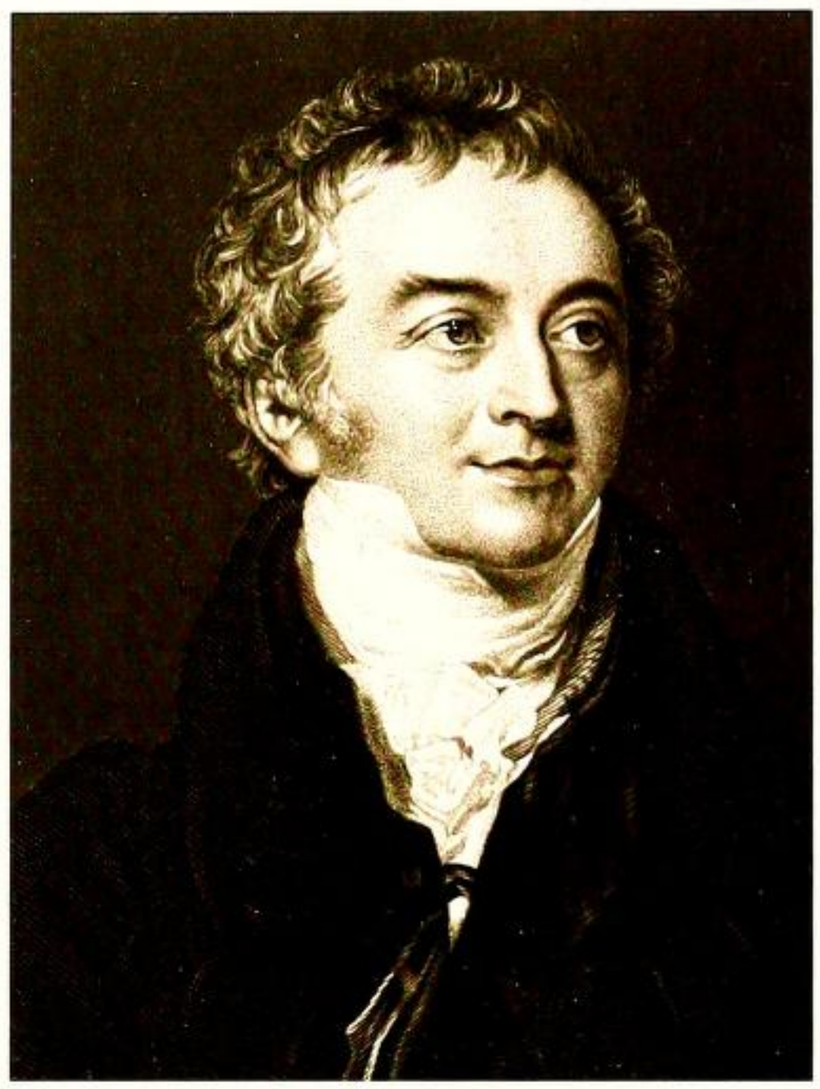
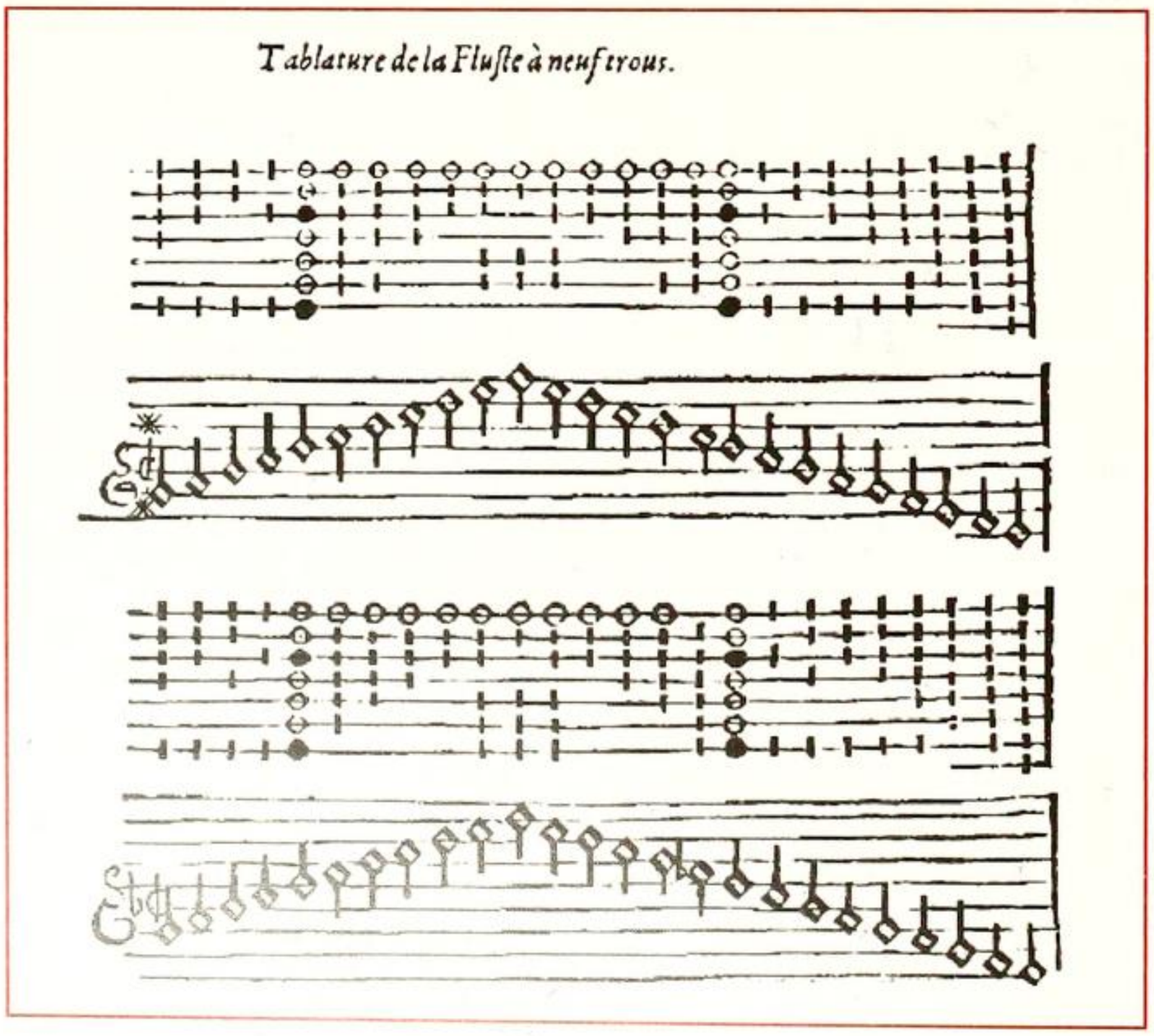


2

voice, however had to wait for the progress of the science of sound. Acoustics has always been, more or less, the step-child of the physical sciences. Man's earliest attempts to understand the physical world were almost necessarily confined to those aspects of it, which one could see or measure directly, and the basic phenomena of acoustics are all too minute and too rapid to be dealt with other than indirectly.

Although the relationship between the frequencies of vibrating strings had been known since the time of Pythagoras (550 BC), the absolute frequency of a musical note was first measured by Mersenne, who published his results in the "Harmonie Universelle" in 1636.[1]

Harmonie Universelle

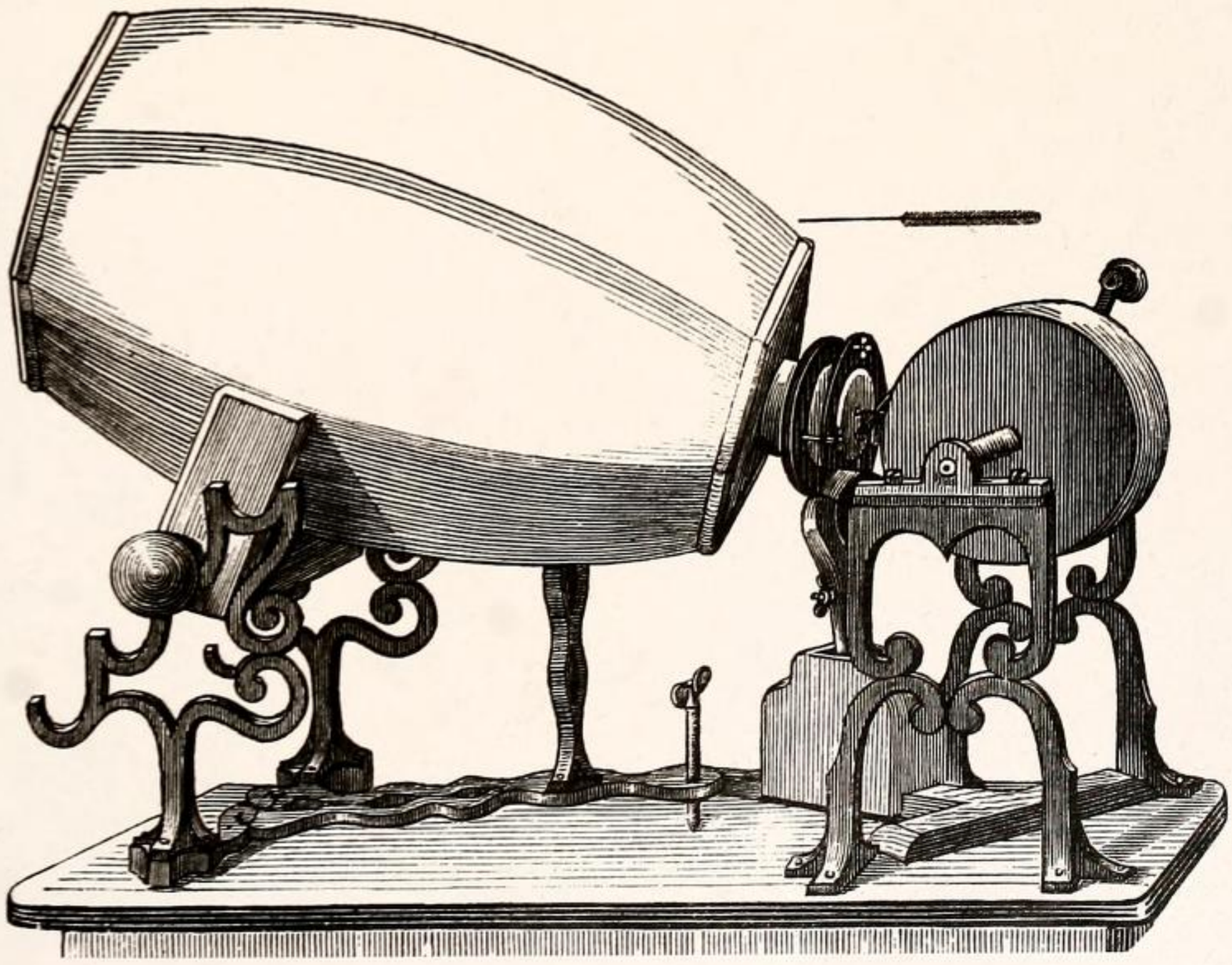



In 1806, using a machine called 'Vibrograph', Thomas Young registered the minute vibration of a tuning-fork on a rotating drum covered with wax. Leon Scott, a French librarian and typesetter improved it in 1859 and invented a new machine called the "Phonoautograph" that could translate the fluctuating air pressure into a scribed trace on a smoked cylinder by means of a stylus attached to a membrane; however, the resulting transcription failed to produce sound. According to unverified reports, Scott had visited Abraham Lincoln in the White House and had made a recording of his voice on a piece of paper covered with lamp black. This recording was called a Kymograph. It is surmised that had this Kymograph been available today it could had been used to recreate Lincoln's voice, only Scott never completed the conceptual leap that would have allowed him to reverse the process.

In 1877, another Frenchman Charles Cross

suggested possible improvements in Scott's method. He propounded that by photoengraving the trace onto metal, it is possible to retrace the pattern which can help replay the original sound. Scott, thereafter submitted a paper to the 'French Academy of Sciences' and called his conceptual machine a 'Palaeophone', but he failed to translate his concept into reality. The same year the phonograph was developed as a result of Thomas Edison's work on two other inventions, the telegraph and the telephone. In 1877, Edison was working on a machine to transcribe telegraphic messages through indentations on paper tape, which could later be sent over the telegraph repeatedly. This development led Edison to speculate that a telephone message could also be recorded in a similar fashion. He experimented with a diaphragm which had an embossing point and was held against rapidly-moving paraffin coated paper. The sound vibrations made indentations on the paper. Edison later changed the paper to a metal cylinder with tin foil wrapped around it. The machine had two diaphragm-and-needle units, one for recording, and one for playback. When one spoke into a mouthpiece, the sound vibrations would be indented onto the cylinder by the recording needle in a vertical (or hill and dale) groove pattern. Edison gave a sketch of the machine to his mechanic John Kreusi which Kreusi supposedly delivered within 30 hours. Edison immediately tested the machine by speaking the nursery rhyme "Mary had a little lamb" into the mouthpiece. To his amazement, the machine played his words back. This event is reported to have taken place on August 12,

Leon Scott



Phonoautograph

Thomas A. Edison

1877 but some historians believe that it probably happened several months later, since Edison did not file for a patent until December 24, 1877. Also, the diary of Charles Batchelor, one of Edison's aides, seems to confirm that the phonograph was not constructed until December 4, and finished two days later.

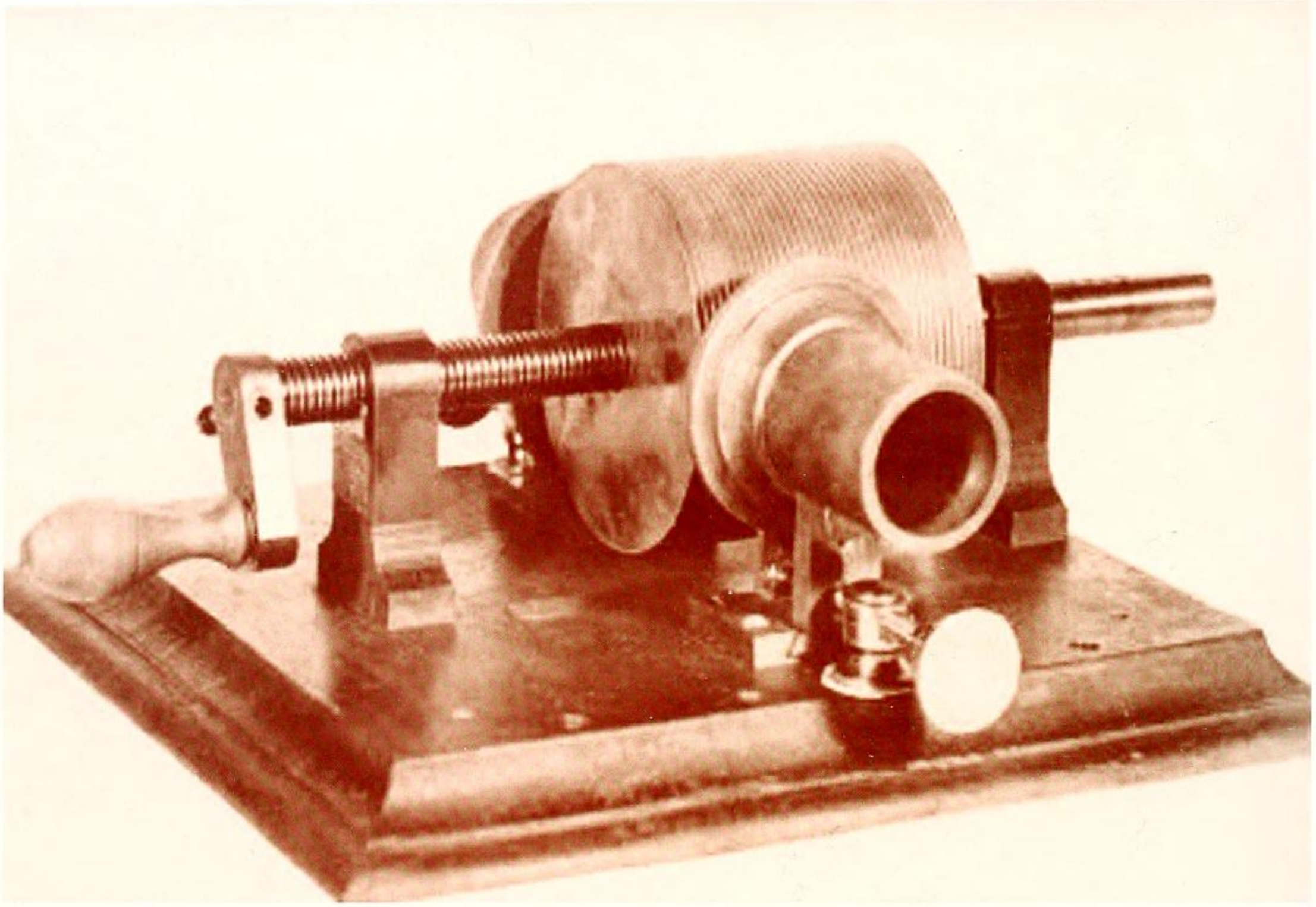
The December 22, 1877 issue of the Scientific American reported: "Mr. Thomas A. Edison recently came into this office, placed a little machine on our desk, turned a crank, and the machine inquired as to our health, asked how we liked the phonograph, informed us that it was very well, and bid us a cordial good night."

The news aroused great interest around the world and within less than a month of the first public demonstration of Edison's machine, Bengalee periodical 'Samachar Chandrika' published the news of the invention of Edison's Phonograph in its issue dated January 9, 1878: "By the help of this machine words can be stored in its bottle and whenever one desires, he can open the cork and hear the words. Even after a hundred or even a thousand years, by reopening the cork one could hear the same words." Clearly the reporter had no idea about the working of a phonograph and the report today appears amusing for using the imagery of fables. At the same time the report uncannily used a term that is quite contemporary- recorded music is now called canned music which is not so different from bottled music.

Scientific American
Cover Page

Between December 1877 and May 1878, Edison filed phonograph patent applications for nineteen different countries. The patent on the phonograph was issued on February 19, 1878. More importantly, in Dec. 1878, he filed a declaration for grant of patent in British India through his agent William James Simmons for marketing of his phonographs in India. The step may have looked foolhardy and far fetched but Edison was just being astute-crushed and colonized, India with its fabulously rich Maharajahs and Nawabs was still an attractive destination for novelties and luxury goods.

The Edison's speaking Phonograph Company was established on January 24, 1878, to exploit the new machine by exhibiting it as a scientific marvel and fun novelty. Edison received $10,000 for the manufacturing and sales rights and 20% of the profits. As a novelty, the machine was an instant success, but was difficult to operate except by experts, and the tin foil would last for only a few playings.[2]



Edison's Tinfoil Phonograph

Before the year was out, news of the first live demonstration of a phonograph in Calcutta was being reported in the Bengali periodical "Sambad Prabhakar" in its issue dated December 21, 1878. A transliteration of a portion of the news goes: "Messers Herbert Harraden (Son of Mr. Samuel Harraden) has demonstrated in the Dalhousie Institute a machine named Phonograph invented by Mr. Edison. In this tiny machine any kind of words or songs can be inserted and later the machine can reproduce the same without any alteration. A lot of crowd gathered during the exhibition. A Hindi song rendered by Mr. Dave Carson was clearly reproduced from this machine".[3]

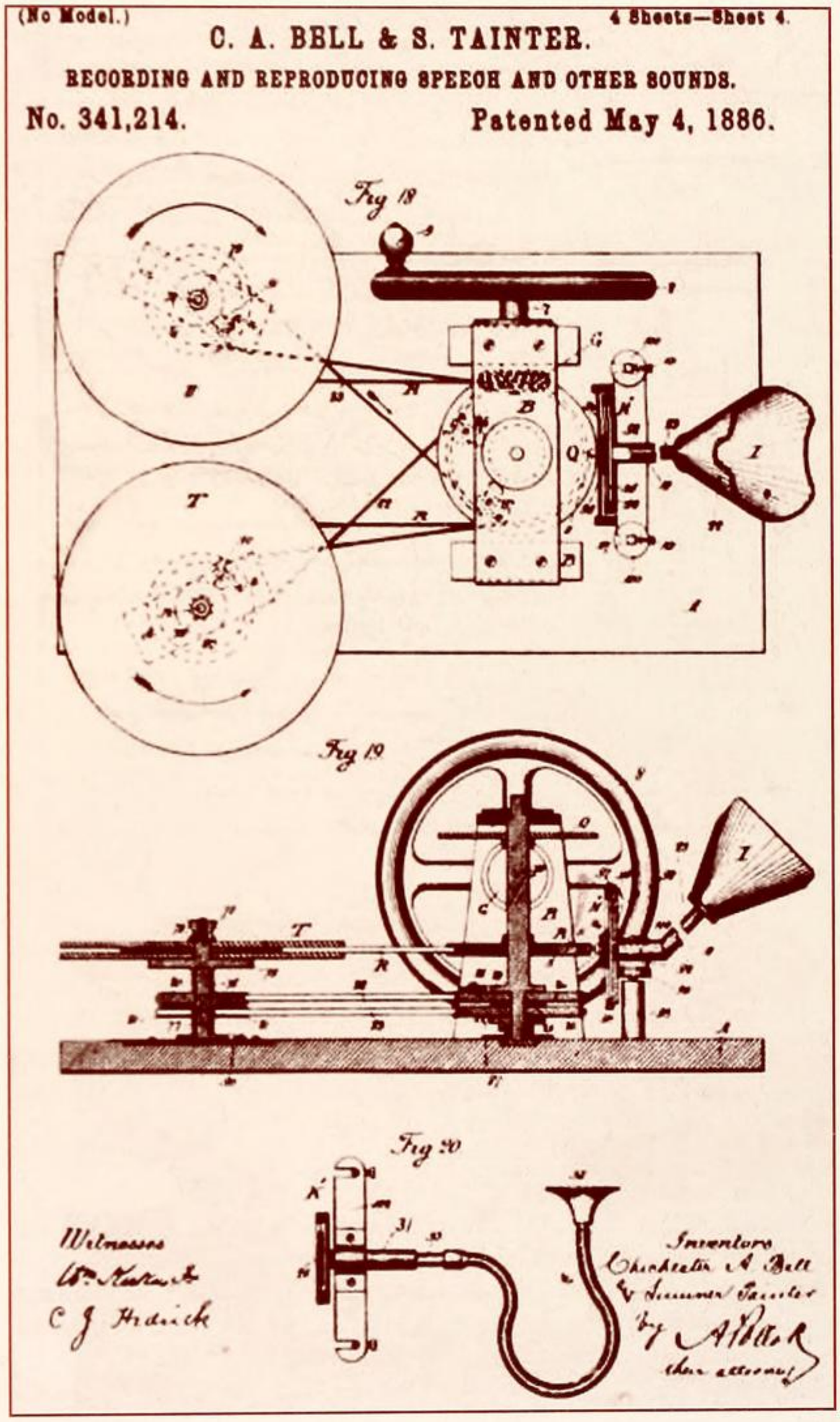
Edison suggested a number of possible future uses of his machine: in letter writing and all kinds of dictation without the aid of a stenographer; phonographic books- which will speak to the blind; the teaching of elocution; reproduction of music; the 'Family Record'- a registry of sayings, reminiscences, by members of a family in their own voices, and of the last words of dying person, music boxes and toys; clocks that should announce in articulate speech the time for going home, eating meals etc.; the preservation of languages by the exact reproduction of the manner of pronunciation; educational purposes such as preserving the explanations made by a teacher, so that the pupil can refer to them any time and spelling or other lessons placed upon the phonograph for convenience in committing to memory; connection with the telephone, so as to make that instrument an auxiliary in the transmission of permanent and invaluable records, instead of being the recipient of momentary and fleeting communication.

In 1885, Chichester Bell and Charles Tainter invented a second type of phonograph and were granted Patent Numbers 341 and 214 on May, 4th 1886. This machine, called a Graphophone, used wax-coated cylinders instead of tinfoil cylinders. Bell and Tainter wanted to col-

laborate with Edison for further development of this machine, but Edison refused the offer because he wanted to improve his phonograph. He devised an improved machine, "New Phonograph", which used wax cylinders made of ceresin, beeswax and stearic wax. To market this machine, Edison founded "The Edison Phonograph Company" on October 8th, 1887.

Edison's Phonographic concept found application in the manufacture of a number of machines of day- to- day use like the coin-slot phonograph- a forerunner of the juke box, talking alarm clocks and talking dolls. Between 1895 and 1899, he developed various models of the phonograph like Spring Motor Phonograph, Edison Home Phonograph, Edison Standard Phonograph and Edison Concert Phonograph. He also started the National Phonograph Company.

By the concluding years of the 19th century, the Indian market had developed as a promising destination for Phonographs and Gramophones and Cylinders Less than forty years after the fall of the Mughal empire, the brutal crushing of the civil uprising against the British and the plunder of Delhi in 1857, Maharaja Lal & Sons of Delhi were importing and selling phonographs and cylinders in the heart of Moghul Delhi in Chandni Chowk by 1895. Calcutta was not far behind- T.E. Bevan & Company, 10, old Court House Street was the first trading Company of Calcutta to offer a Phonograph for sale by 1897. In addition, Kidar Bux Khan, 80 Bentinck Street Calcutta (1900); The Western Trading Co., 17 Chowringhee, Calcutta (1901) and M/s G.C. Mookerjee & Sons, 62, Bentinck Street Calcutta (1901), were also dealing in Phonographs, Gramophones, Cylinders and Discs. The market was growing day by day. Other Indian Companies like M/s M.L. Shaw, 23/5 Dharamtala Street and M/s Dwarkin and Sons, 267, Bow Bazar Calcutta were also selling Gramophones and Phonographs.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C. A. BELL & S. TAINTER.

RECORDING AND REPRODUCING SPEECH AND OTHER SOUNDS.

No. 341,214. Patented May 4, 1886.

Fig 18

Fig 19

Fig 20

Witnesses
C J Hadick

Inventors
Chichester A Bell
& Charles Tainter
by A Bell
their attorney

Chichester Bell and Charles Tainter Patent

In early 1899, Frederick William Gaisberg, the recording expert of The Gramophone Company Ltd. took the first known disc recordings of Indian repertoires in London. This oriental series of recordings mainly consisted of recitations of selected portions of religious scriptures in Hindi, Urdu, Persian, Gurmukhi and Arabic languages. Parts of the great epic Ramayana were recorded in Hindi in the voice of Dr. Harnam Das. Other Hindi

Frederick William Gaisberg

records were renderings of portions of the opera, 'Rahas Mandal' in the voice of Capt. Bholanath. Mr. Ahmed lent his voice to almost all Urdu, Arabic and Persian records. These records primarily covered recitation of verses from the Holy Koran. Some of these records also covered selected portion from Firdausi's satire on Sultan Mahmood, 'Sakinama' by Hafiz Shirazi, the verses of Ghalib and Zaheer Fariabi. One record in the voice of Hazrat, was dedicated to "Shahana", a kind of wedding song. Similarly, recordings in Gurumukhi contained hymms by Guru Nanak Dev Ji and were recited by an unknown artist. Altogether forty-four recordings were presented under The Oriental Series (record numbers 10,000 to 10,043); fifteen of these were in Hindi, twenty in Persian, five in Urdu, two in Arabic and the remaining two in Gurumukhi.

With the introduction of a number of new models of phonographs, cylinders also underwent modifications and their improved versions were introduced in the market. The first records were made on strips of tinfoil, the predecessor of household aluminum foil, wrapped around a 4-inch diameter drum. The drum was hand-cranked at about 60 revolutions per minute (RPM) and the phonographic apparatus made sound impressions upon the foil. The expected lifetime of a foil recording was short because after a few playbacks the sound impressions were either worn down or the foil had ripped. By 1888, a cylinder record standard had emerged; it had shrunk in size to a little over 2" in diameter and 4" in length, was made of a usually brownish wax-like material - and was brittle. Earlier wax cylinder recording speeds varied; slower speeds such as 90-RPM, used often for spoken material, would yield a nearly 4-minute recording, while faster speed from 120 to 160-RPM (or more) for music would run for around 2 to 2½ minutes but by 1902 had settled into a standard 160-RPM.[4]

"Early phonograph recordings were accomplished literally by brute force- all acoustically. The performers would stand before a funnel-shaped horn attached to a phonograph and belt out their tunes. High volumes of sound were required to force the recording diaphragm (made variously of glass, mica, or copper) to vibrate sufficiently to force the cutting stylus to make a good carving on the blank wax cylinder. Due to the inflexibility of the recording diaphragm, some instruments did not record well. Instruments such as the violin, which produced complex sounds, recorded weakly. Not surprisingly, horned instruments recorded best. Consequently, marching band numbers were prominent in many early recordings. To produce a distinct recording, the number of instruments would also be kept to a minimum - 15 or so for a band, 4 or so for a chorus. Therefore, many early recordings present a simpler music by necessity.

With advances in technology, recording

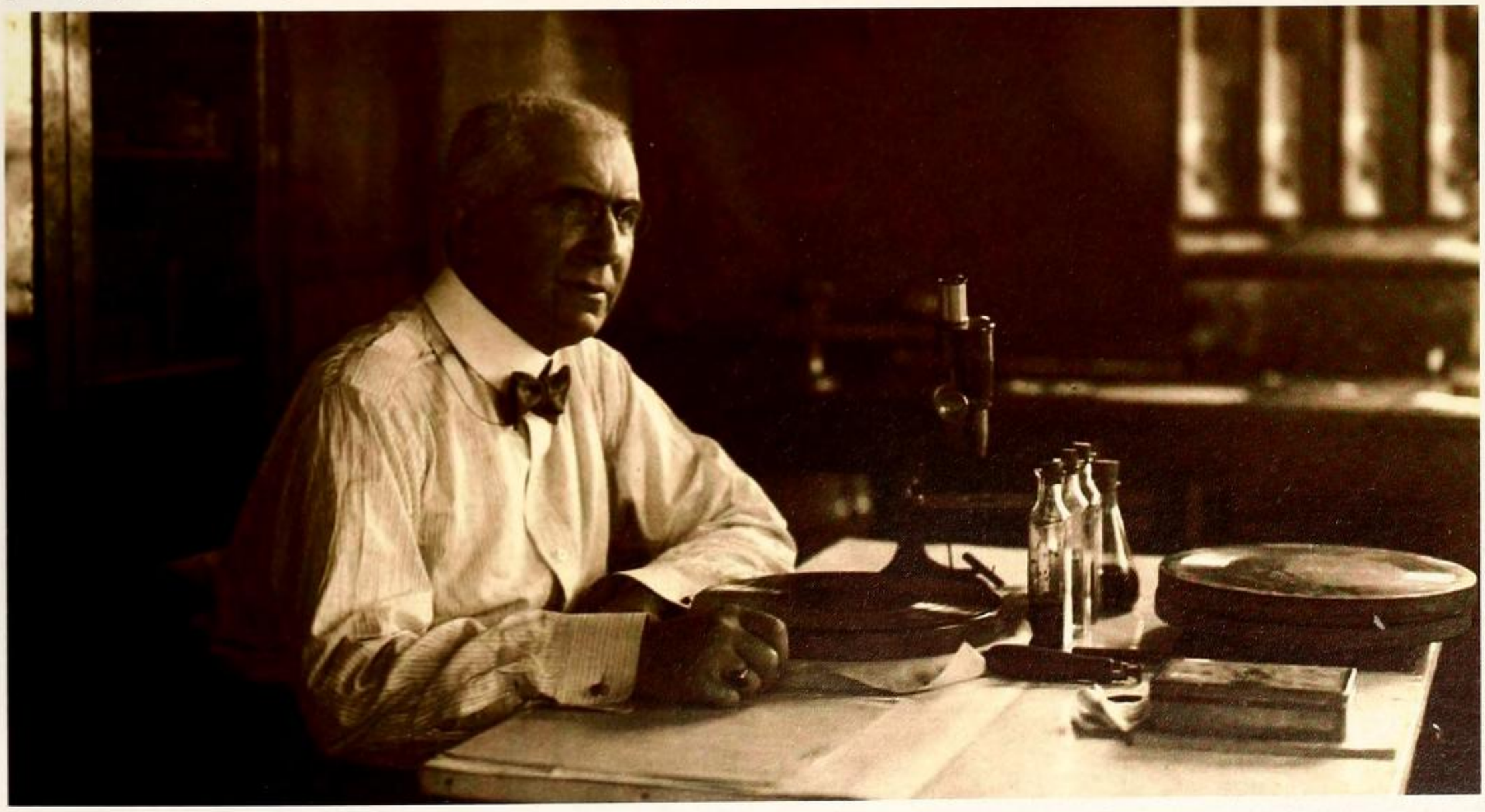
and dissemination of sound has become direct and simple today. Spare a thought for how far things have come: with no method for mass-producing copies of a single recording, early inventories of recordings were created by huddling multiple phonographs near the performers. Each phonograph was operated simultaneously, each making a recording of the performance. The recorded cylinders would then be replaced with fresh blanks, and the process repeated. This way a band could make from 10 to 15 recordings per take. Often, the band would then repeat the same tune, take after take. At, say, around ten-minutes per take, up to 90 records could be produced per hour … all being well. Pity the singing performers- only about 4 phonographs could acceptably be used simultaneously, netting maybe 24 records per hour..

Soon, primitive duplicating methods were devised by connecting one phonograph to another. An early approach used a hollow rubber tube running between the master and duplicating phonographs. Later, direct linkage connected the reproducing stylus of the master to the cutting stylus of the recording phonograph thus duplicating pantographically. Only a limited number of copies - which typically had an inferior, brasher sound - could have been made using these techniques due to the wearing down of the wax master."[5]

In 1900, Thomas Lambert developed a method to mass-duplicate and manufacture tougher celluloid cylinders. This employed a process of making a copper negative matrix by electrolysis from a wax master and using heat and pressure to mould durable celluloid copies from this matrix. By 1902, Edison introduced a process for manufacturing cylinders using a gold electrode. Sub-masters created from the gold-master were used for further production of cylinders. Now it was possible to manufacture 120 to 150 cylinders per day from a single mould which helped considerably in bringing down the price of cylinders. Known as high-speed-hard-wax-moulded-rounds in the beginning, these cylinders became popular as gold-moulded-cylinders.

Parallel to the development of phonograph and graphophone, a third type of sound recording and talking machine was also taking shape in the meantime. Emil Berliner, an American of German origin, developed a method of moulding the sound carrying grooves on the surface of a disc.

Emil Berliner



Gramophone
recording device

F. W. Gaisberg, a close associate of Berliner and the first sound recording expert who undertook the first recording expedition to India for Berliner's company, recounted that "It was Billy Golden who one day in Washington asked me if I would go with him to see a funny German who had started experimenting with a flat disc talking machine record and wanted to make some trials. I was only too eager to see him at work. We found Emile Berliner in his small laboratory on New York Avenue and received a warm welcome from the inventor. Billy was right, Berliner certainly did make me smile. Dressed in a monkish frock he paced up and down the small studio buzzing on a diaphragm. "Hello, hello!" he recited in guttural, broken English, "Tvinkle, tvinkle, little star, how I vonder vot you are." Berliner delighted in creating effects, and the youthful enthusiasm I showed must have gratified him.

I was introduced to the inventor and invited to witness the making of the first gramophone record. Berliner placed a muzzle over Golden's mouth and connected this up by a rubber hose to a diaphragm. I was at the piano, the sounding-board of which was also boxed up and connected to the diaphragm by a hose resembling an elephant's trunk. Berliner said "are you ready?" and upon our answering "Yes", he began to crank like a barrel-organ, and said "Go." The song finished, Berliner stopped cranking. He took from the machine a bright zinc disc and plunged it into an acid bath for a few minutes. Then, taking it out of the acid, he washed and cleaned the disc.

Placing it on a reproducing machine, also operated by hand like a coffee-grinder, he played back the resulting record from the etched groove. To our astonished ears came the playback of Billy Golden's voice. Berliner proudly explained to us just how his method was superior to the phonograph. He said that in his process the recording stylus was vibrated laterally on a flat surface, thus always encountering an even resistance, and this accounted for the more natural tone.

Acquainted as I was with the tinny, unnatural reproduction of the old cylinder-playing phonographs, I was spell-bound by the

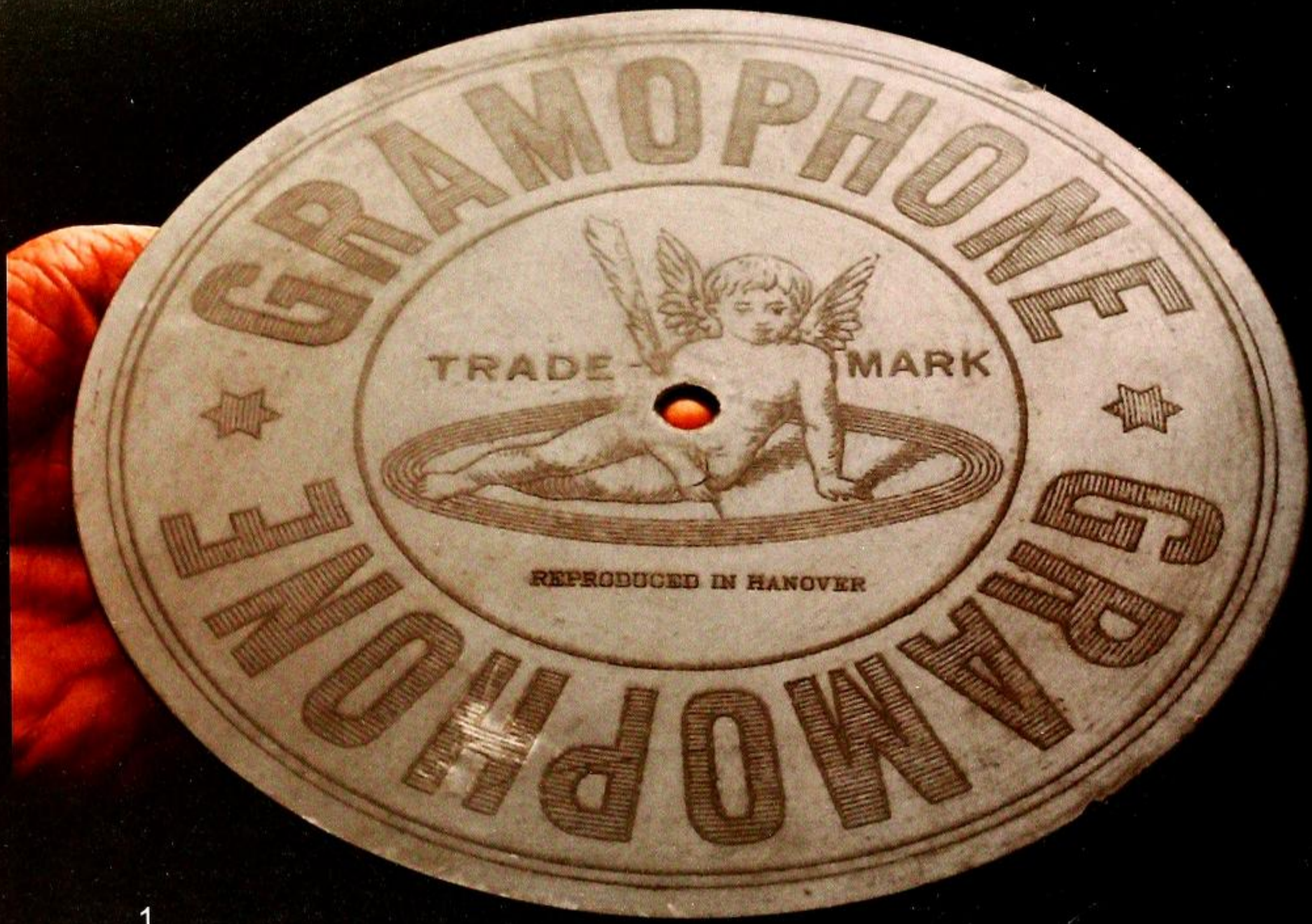
Gramophone player

beautiful round tone of the flat gramophone disc. Before I departed that day, I exacted a promise from Berliner that he would let me work for him when his machine was ready for development."

Berliner was granted patent number 372, 786 for a 'Gramophone', which used a non-wax disc, photo- engraved with a lateral-cut-groove. Berliner also invented the method of mass production of copies of an original recorded disc and was the first to mass-produce hard rubber vulcanite copies from a zinc master disc. The Berliner Gramophone Company was incorporated on 8th October 1895. Later, Berliner discovered that shellac was a better option than hard rubber for manufacturing disc records. His gramophone machine was improved further when Eldridge Johnson added to it a Levi Montross designed motor to maintain a uniform speed of revolution. This made disc-phonographs immensely popular as people did not have to hand-crank the machine. Eldridge Johnson also merged his 'Consolidated Talking Machine Co.' with Berliner's 'The Gramophone Company' to create 'The Victor Talking Machine Company' in 1901. Labeling a recorded disc was a serious problem till Eldridge Johnson found a fool-proof way out around 1900. He patented a new method of affixing a circular paper label on the disc records, while the record was still hot. He applied for a patent in 1900 and his technique remained in vogue for many years. Till then, to enable the identification of the recorded person-artists announced their names (early Indian records also had artists announcing their names so the records could be accurately identified at the time of pressing). Sometimes a paper label carrying all details was affixed on the record but the labels would come off as glue did not stick for long to the shellac or celluloid disk.

The introduction of 'Red Label Special Records' underlined the importance of using proper and fancy labels: a St. Petersburg (Russia) dealer of Berliner's record insisted on paying an astronomical 'artist's fee' to four of the Czar's favorite singers and proposed to bring out their records with a much higher price-tag. He also wanted these records to have red labels to distinguish them from other

1- Gramophone disc trade mark
2- Dog Nipper
3- Nipper Listening Phonograph
4- Nipper Listening Gramophone
5- Nipper as HMV Trade mark

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brands. The logic behind the ploy was that this being a special release, would fetch a higher price and members of the Russian aristocracy would fall over themselves to buy it as it featured the favorite singers of the Czar. The proposal was accepted and as expected, this release of the 'Red Label Special Records' was a whopping success.

In 1898 The Gramophone Company Ltd. had already been formed in London through an understanding between E. Berliner and Trevor Lloyd Williams. A disc reproducing and manufacturing unit was also established in Hanover, Germany. The company adopted the "Recording Angel" Trade Mark, which was later substituted by the iconic picture of a dog called Nipper listening to a gramophone and the legend-"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"

There is an interesting story behind the choice of this label. Nipper was born in Bristol, England, in the year 1884. He was given this name because of his tendency to nip the back of a visitor's legs. Nipper was not a thorough-bred but had plenty of Bull Terrier in him. After Nipper's master Mark Barraud died in 1887, Mark's younger brother Francis, a painter, brought him to Liverpool. He noticed that Nipper looks puzzled when he listens to a playing phonograph as if he is trying to make out where the voice is coming from. This left a

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4

lasting impression on the mind of Francis. In the meantime Nipper went back to live with Mark Barraud's widow in Kingston-upon-Thames in Surrey and died there in September 1895. Three years later, Francis made a painting titled 'Nipper listening to a Phonograph' in 1898 and registered it as 'Dog looking at and listening to a Phonograph'. Once again, he changed the title of the painting and named it "His Master's Voice". He tried to sell this painting to the Edison Bell Company, but they refused to buy it stating 'dogs don't listen to phonographs'. The horn of the phonograph in the painting was painted black, someone suggested Francis paint it a bright colour which may make the painting more attractive and saleable. Francis thought it made sound business sense and decided to hire a machine with a horn. He approached Barry Owen, manager of The Gramophone Company of E. Berliner. After seeing the painting Owen suggested Francis paint a Gramophone instead of a Phonograph and ultimately bought the painting for his Company. Francis received a sum of £50 for the painting and another £50 for the full copyright on 4th October, 1899. Though this painted picture made its first public appearance on the advertising literature of The Gramophone Company in January, 1900, it was fully registered as a trademark only in 1910. In India, The Gramophone Company introduced the logo of the Dog

and Gramophone from 1909 onwards. However, the legend 'His Master's Voice' with the picture of 'Nipper listening to a Gramophone' was introduced in India only in December, 1915.

The early disc records were recorded on a single side. Ademore Petite first thought of utilizing the potential of the reverse side of a disc record, he received a patent for the process in 1904.

While these interesting developments were taking place in Europe and America, the Indian subcontinent was also taking notice of these developments with great interest. Within a decade of the introduction of sound recording machines Indian scientists and aristocrats had procured a few machines and recordings of voices of friends and family members had begun. Between 1886 and 1899, Father Eugene Lafont, a teacher of Science at the St. Xavier's College Calcutta who taught Rabindra Nath Tagore and the famous scientist Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose, had already procured Edison's Phonograph and had demonstrated it at various places. In a letter to the Editor of the Statesman dated July 13, 1886, Eugene Lafont wrote: " It may perhaps interest some of your readers to know that on Tuesday evening at 7.30, I shall exhibit and work an excellent "Phonograph", at the lecture hall of the Indian Association, No 210, Bow-Bazar. I shall make this wonderful talking machine speak, cough, laugh and sing." By 1890, Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose too had procured a phonograph for the Presidency College, Calcutta.

Around 1900 H. Bose (Hemendra Mohan Bose) obtained an Edison Phonograph machine and over the next couple of years he is reported to have made some private recordings on this machine of his friends, some of whom had been past alumni of the Presidency College, Calcutta.[6] H. Bose's career in recording can be said to have started before 1902-the year in which Fredric Gaisberg made his first native-content recordings in India. The renowned physicist D.M. Bose who succeeded Professor J.C. Bose as the director of the Bose's Institute wrote that after returning from England in 1902, J.C. Bose started residing in his newly constructed house in Parsibagan Lane where Rabindra Nath Tagore frequently visited him. During these visits Tagore used to sing songs in the drawing room so that H. Bose could record them in his new Pathephone machine (Dr. D.M. Bose, Abala Bose-Her Life and Times, Modern Review, June

The Statesman

(Letter to the Editor)

THE "PHONOGRAPH".

To the Editor.

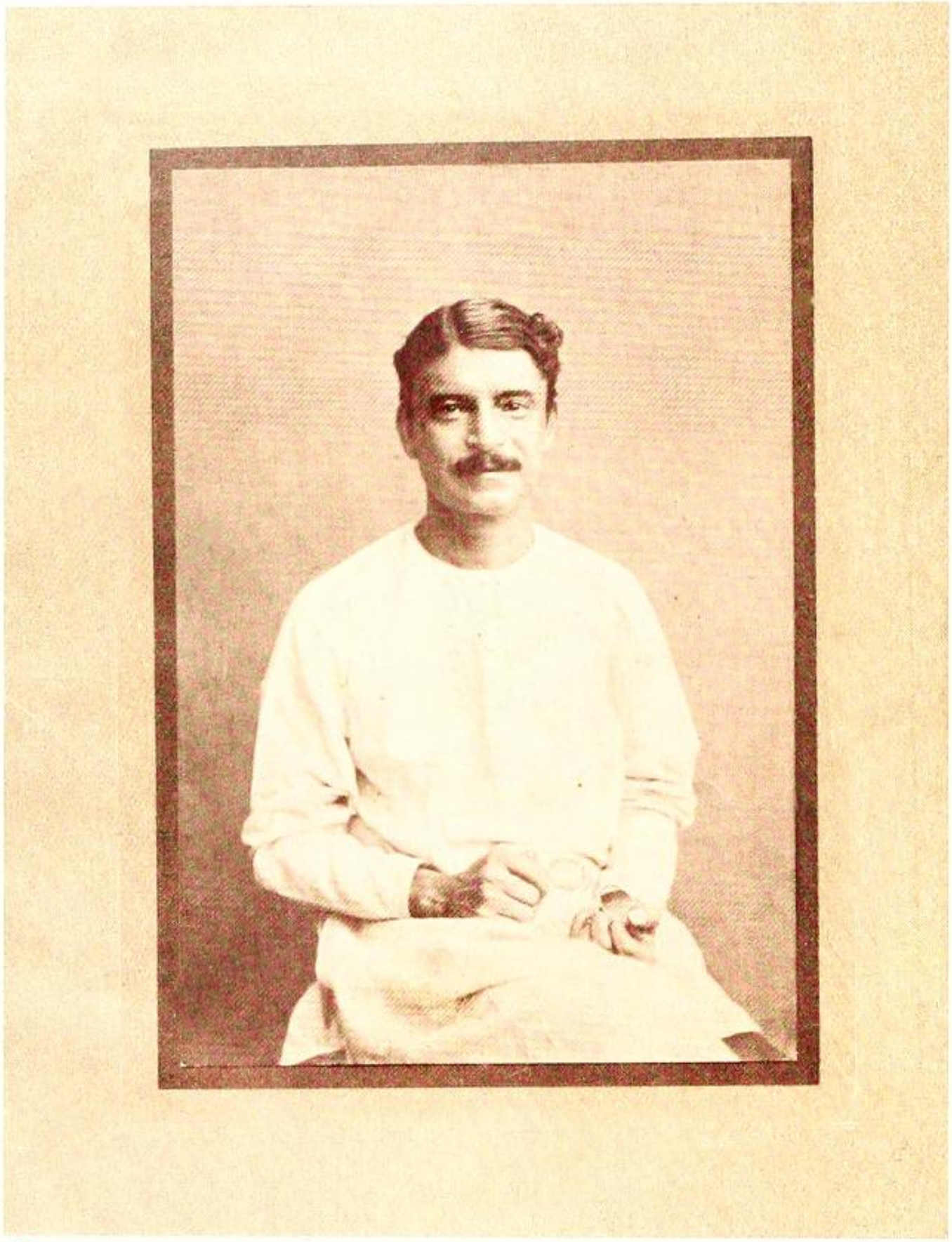
Sir,—It may perhaps interest some of your readers to know that on Thursday evening at 7-30, I shall exhibit and work an excellent "Phonograph" at the lecture hall of the Indian Association, No. 210, Bow-Bazaar. I shall make this wonderful talking machine speak, cough, laugh, and sing.

E. LAFONT, S.J.

July 13, 1886.

E. Lafont's Letter to Editor The Statesman

Francis with his Painting



Hemendra Mohan Bose

1966). There is little doubt that writing years later, Dr. D.M. Bose has confused cylinder records with Pathephone. Elsewhere the same author has commented that H. Bose could very skillfully make recordings on the wax cylinders of the phonograph and made a number of recordings of Tagore's swadeshi songs. (Quoted from a Bengali manuscript of D.M. Bose by Dibakar Sen," Rabindra Nath O Jagadish Chandrer Uttarsuri", Bharat O Samajtantrik, G.D.R. May-June 1983).

Charuchandra Bhattacharya provides the second evidence of Bose's activities in 1902 and the reliance of Professor J.C. Bose on him for voice recording. Bhattacharya writes, "when we were students of M.A. class, Jagadish Chandra Bose returned from England. Sometimes, he invited students of M.A. class to his house... I remember an afternoon like that. The phonograph had recently made an advent in our country and H. Bose was making 'deshi' (indigenous) records. A record was made to play-"Majhi tor baitha nere ami aar baite parlam na" (A 'Bhatiali' or boatman's song)[Amar Pathaddashar Kale, Jugantar, Annual Number, 1950] Whether these recordings as well as other contemporary ones were commercially released as H. Bose's records from his Talking Machine Hall, 41 Dharmatalla Street (presently Lenin Sarani) cannot be ascertained."[7]

Certainly other private, non-commercial recordings would have been made by at least some of the affluent and royal Indian owners of sound recording machines but they have not been traced so far. British officers of the Raj made good use of the advances in photography and sound recording to create anthropological documents. The Cylindrical Phonograph was first commercially marketed in 1888 commencing therewith an age of 'canned', 'transmitted' or 'mediated' music and thus benefited the field of ethnomusicological research immensely. In this context, it was first used by Jesse Walter Fewkes, who in 1890 used it for recording of Passamaguoddy Indians (North American Indian Folk Lore). In a letter dated 20th March 1890, addressed to the famous anthropologist Prof. A.C.Haddon, Fewkes writes:

"The Phonograph will, I think, give a more scientific turn to the study of Folk Lore for it will give an exact record of the stories exactly as the Indians tell them with their exact pronunciation."

However in the Indian context, perhaps the oldest surviving non-commercial wax-cylinders are the recordings of the music of the Todas of South India, currently with The National Sound Archives (NSA), a wing of the British Library in London. A detailed report of the existence of such cylinders has been made through the pioneering work of Amitabh Ghose, Scientist

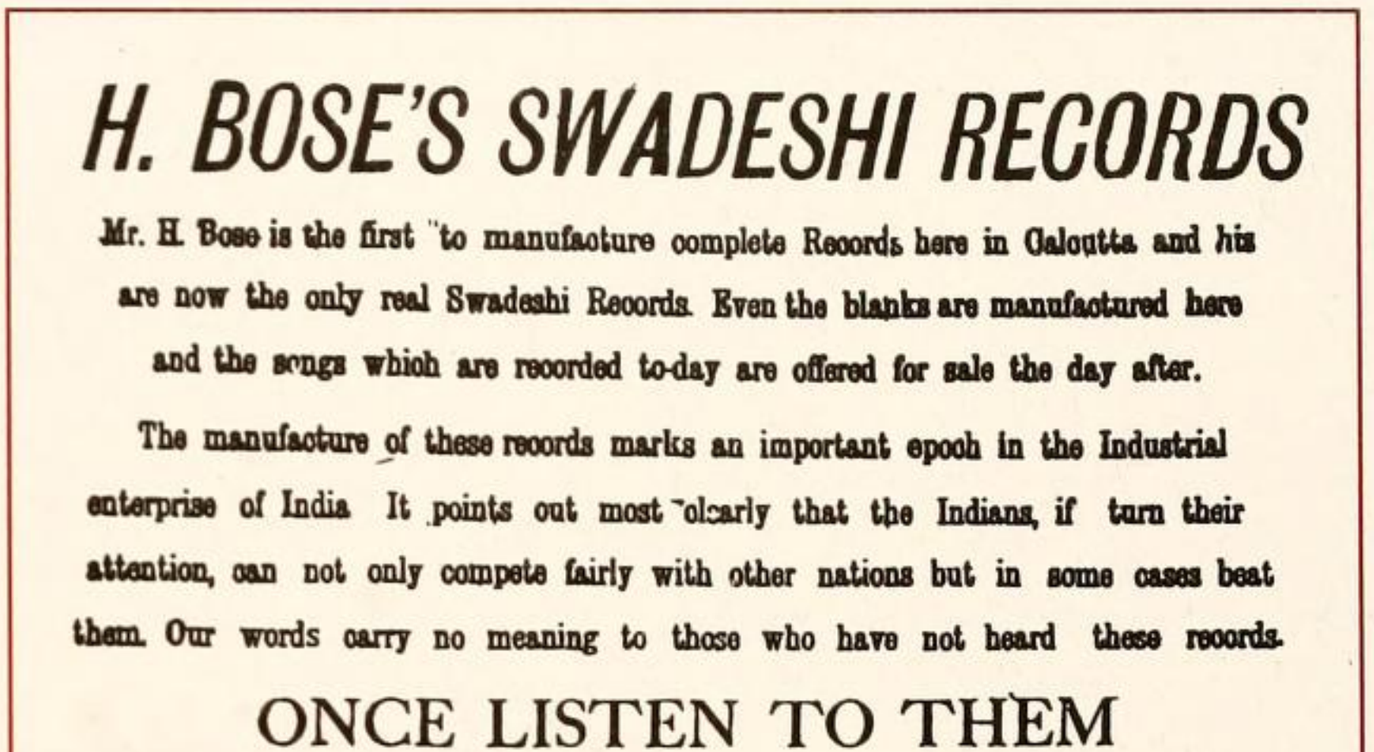
(NISTADS), Center for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta.

"Two sets of non-commercial recordings made in India on wax cylinder are still extant and are in the safe custody of the National Sound Archive (NSA), a wing of the British Library in London (not taking into account 13 cylinders of an unidentified Baluchistan Series). There are 137 Cylinder records-including duplicates and may be a few stray ones in NSA (Ref. No.C.624) which were recorded by Edgar Thurston and his assistant K Rangachari. In the report of NSA dated 2nd September 1994, there is an indication that this collection belonged to Madras museum. No mention is however made when and how the collection was transferred from Madras to London.

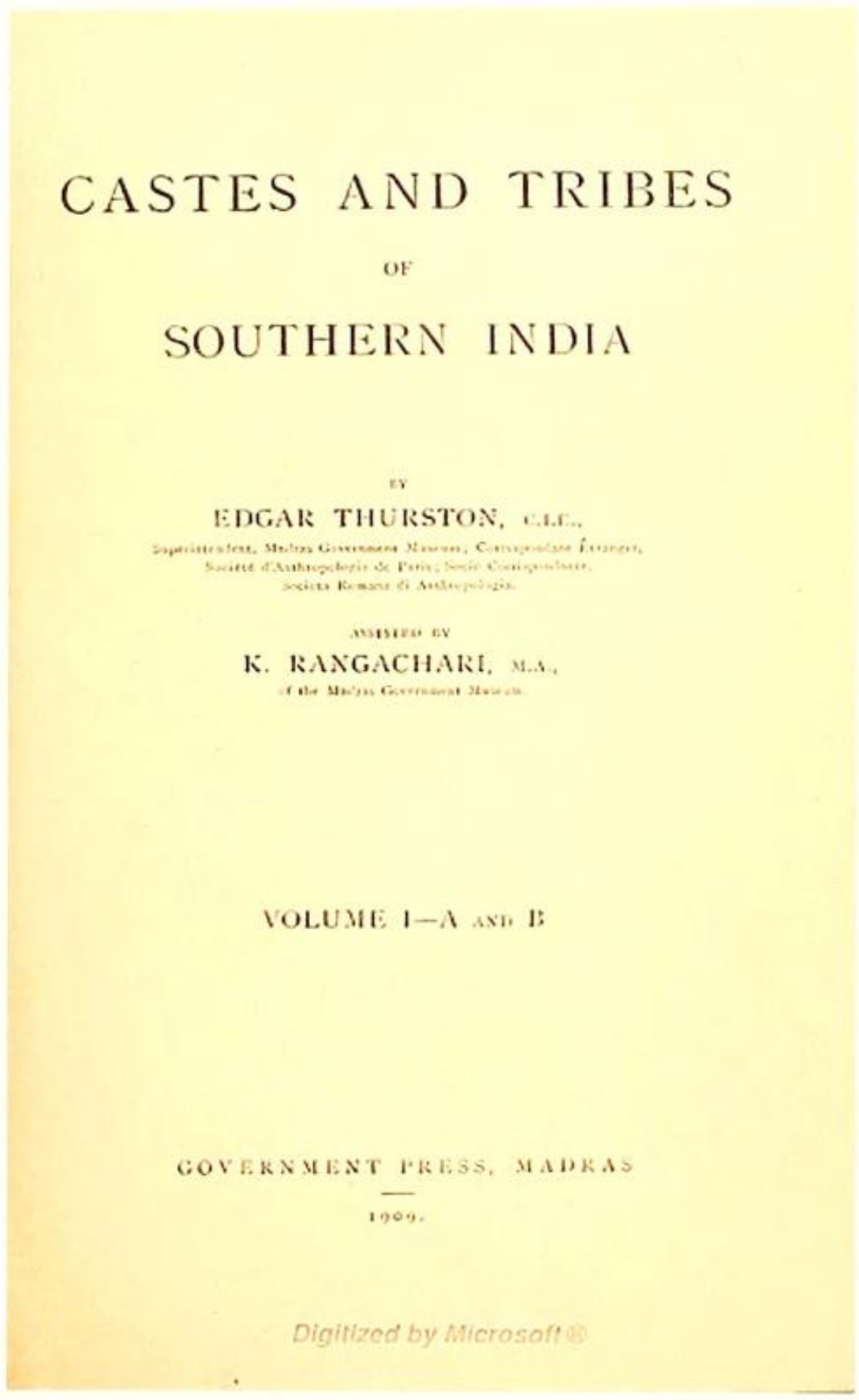
The NSA report, already referred to, provides us with the following information: "These (Thurston's collections) are a mixture of South Indian Classical Music and Tribal Music from the same region..... Thurston was a doctor turned museum curator and Superintendent of the Madras Government Museum from 1885 to 1908, he took up anthropology, and at least for the next 15 years he studied the various castes and tribes of Southern India, publishing a number of papers and books culminating in the 7 volume work-'Castes and Tribes in Southern India' (Madras 1909). It is not clear when he began recording cylinders-for, if it was in 1894AD, he would have been the first British field recordist. He certainly seems to have been recording by 1901, when he makes reference in a paper to songs he has collected from the Todas (See-Todas of Nilgiri's, Madras Government Museum Bulletin, Vol. IV No. 1, PP. 7-10). A similar paper of 1896 makes no mention of songs however, Dr. Janet Top Fargion, Curator, Intentional Music collection of NSA, communicated to the author (Shri Ghose) that 17 Thurston cylinders have been dubbed and are accessible for listening."

However, on Thurston's recordings of Todas in 1901, Martin Clayton holds a different view and states: "It is not yet known exactly when he began recording, but correspondence between Thurston and Rivers makes it clear both that he was recording by 1905, and that the inspiration was another member of the Torres Straits group, Charles Myers. The first letter below illustrates the fact that Myers saw comparative musicology as an integral part of psychological research-hence the twin request to record songs and investigate vision. The second extract here refers to Thurston's assistant, K.Rangachari.

"Tell Myers I have for him records of Telugu, Badaga, Chenchu and Toda songs. Got a case of hereditary colour blindness among Badagas. (Thurston to Rivers. Ootacamund, 9 August 1905. Haddon Collection, env.12040.)"


H. BOSE'S SWADESHI RECORDS
Mr. H. Bose is the first to manufacture complete Records here in Calcutta and his are now the only real Swadeshi Records. Even the blanks are manufactured here and the songs which are recorded to-day are offered for sale the day after.
The manufacture of these records marks an important epoch in the Industrial enterprise of India It points out most clearly that the Indians, if turn their attention, can not only compete fairly with other nations but in some cases beat them. Our words carry no meaning to those who have not heard these records.
ONCE LISTEN TO THEM
and you cannot but marvel at the wonderful perfection with which human voice will be reproduced Hundreds of unsolicited testimonials are pouring forth and thousands are speaking of them in highly eulogistic terms.
DON'T SEND YOUR MONEY BEYOND THE SEAS,
BE A TRUE SWADESHI BY USING
Genuine Swadeshi Records.
We have always a very large and well assorted collection of
BENGALI, HINDI, URDU AND URIYA
Records to suit your particular taste.
Illustrated catalogue sent free on application.
The Talking Machine Hall,
Marble House, Dhurrumtollah Street, Calcutta.

H. Bose's Advertisement


CASTES AND TRIBES

OF

SOUTHERN INDIA

BY

EDGAR THURSTON, C.I.E.,

Superintendent, Madras Government Museum; Correspondant Étranger, Société d'Anthropologie de Paris; Socio Corrispondente, Società Romana di Antropologia.

ASSISTED BY

K. RANGACHARI, M.A.,

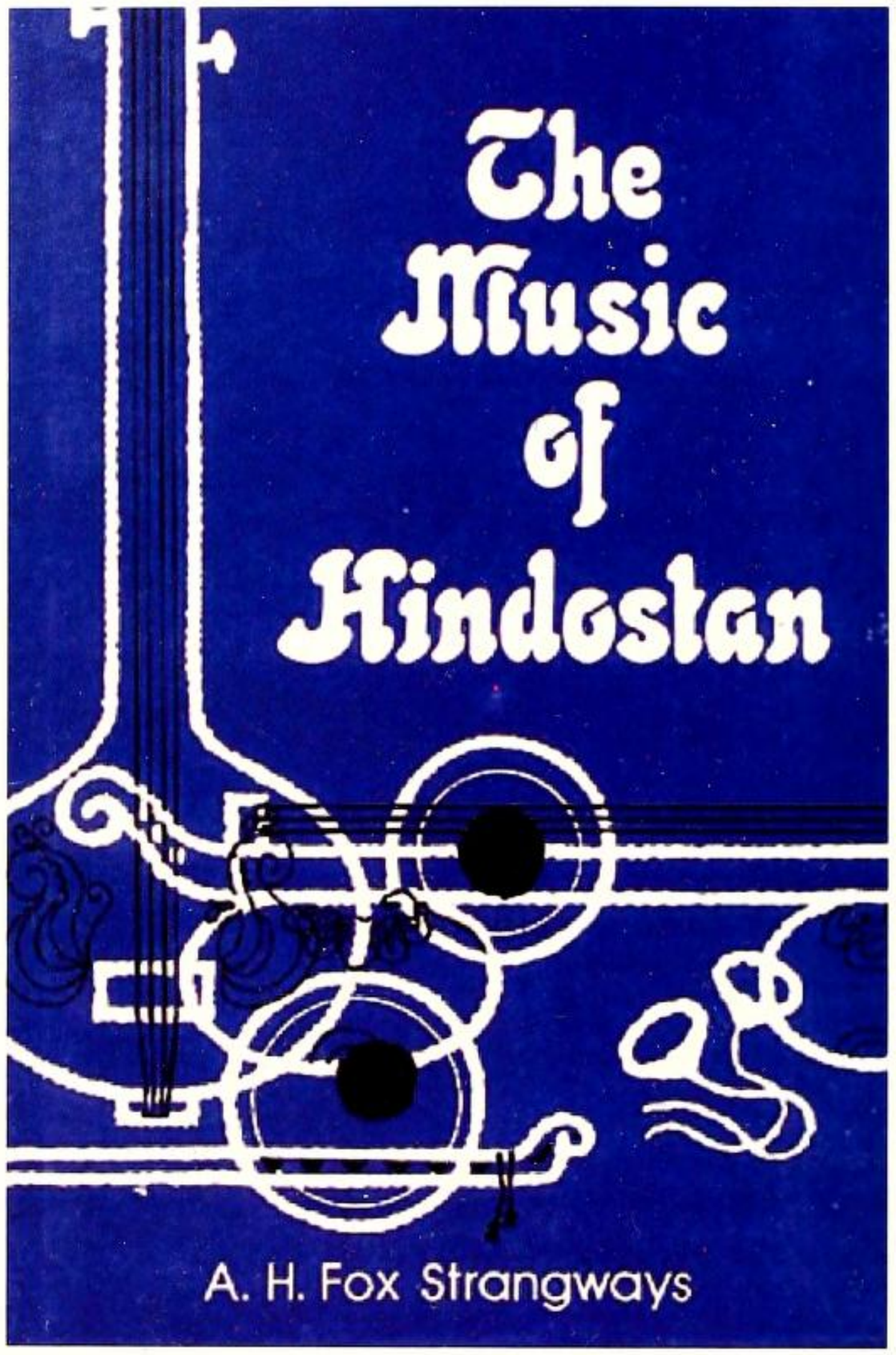
of the Madras Government Museum.

VOLUME I—A AND B

GOVERNMENT PRESS, MADRAS

1909.

Digitized by Microsoft®




E. Thurston's 'Castes and Tribes of Southern India'

A.H. Fox Strangways 'The music of Hindostan'

"Badaga songs being admirably reproduced in the phonograph, which is a great joy for Rangachari. (Thurston to Rivers. "Camp", 13 August 1905. Haddon Collection, env.12040.)"

Rivers had worked with Thurston in the course of his research on the Toda people conducted in 1901-2 and written up in the classic book, The Todas (1906). There is no trace, however, of any sound recordings which might have been made on this trip. Thurston himself makes few references in his published works to music or to sound recording. He does mention "collecting" Toda songs in a paper of 1901, although by this he may mean simply noting down texts, and he makes no reference to sound recordings in his major works (1906, 1909).

Though the NSA collection of ethnographical wax-cylinders totals at around 3200, the second most important set of cylindrical recordings (Ref No.C-72) is Arthur Henry Fox Strangway's (Born 1859) collection. He worked as a school master at Wellington College until 1910, but music was his first love. His visit to India in 1904 attracted him towards Indian Music and was also inspired by reading the great Sanskrit Musicological treatise 'Sangitadarpan'. His book 'The Music of Hindoostan' is still considered to be the best known study of Indian Music by a non-Indian and is a classic of early twentieth century comparative musicology. During his field trip to India in 1910-11, he collected some musical pieces and his book deals with approximately five hundred of them. Thirteen out of these are very important as they are transcribed from wax-cylinder recordings referred in his book. These cylinders preserve the music

of Gond Tribes of Raipur, Panan Tribes of Trichur, Music by Garhwalis, Lullaby, Punjabi Gazal, Sahnai by Havildar Rashu and Naik Nawab, Dhol by Sipahi Miranbaksh and Samveda Chants etc. His collection of high quality recordings were made in Raipur, Madras, Trichur, Tanjore, Allahabad, Jhelum and Poona.

Strangway experienced some peculiar difficulties in recording Indians which he narrates in his book. He also lost many recordings due to the fragile nature of wax-cylinders. He recalls that 'At Allahabad I came across some Garhwalis who had been got down from Mussouri in the Himalaya... They said they could not sing in the daytime because they were thinking about their work, so we had a very merry evening in a hot tent from nine o'clock to past midnight. There was great competition to sing into the phonograph and have their performance given back to them; but unfortunately only one phonogram has survived the railway journey'

From the Indian point of view, some other important cylindrical recordings are by Arnold Adriaan Bake [510 cylinders(C-52)] recorded between 1925 and 1946 covering India, Nepal and Sri Lanka; 13 'Baluchi Cylinders' (C-663) recorded in Baluchistan (Now in Pakistan) by an unknown recordist in 1911; 9 'Tarai Cylinders' (C-674) presumed to originate in Tarai, Madhya Pradesh or The Tarai Jungle on the border of India and Nepal by an unknown recordist in 1909; and The Berlin Phonogram Archive Cylinder (C-665/346) of Gujarati woodwind duet, recorded in Berlin in 1902 by O. Abraham and Erich Von Hornbostel.

Though field recordings and commercial recordings started in India almost simultaneously, the former concentrated more on recording elements of lesser cultures, primarily tribal music. Comparatively the commercial recordings represent more recordings of art music which are representative of the greater culture. Still, early sound recordists who made commercial recordings by visiting fields like F.W.Gaisberg etc. too must be credited for their ethnomusicological contributions.

Interestingly, commercial recording of Indian artists in India commenced in 1902 and their records were released in the Indian market only in 1903. So what was being heard on the Phonographs and Gramophones selling in the Indian market since at least 1895? The answer is, prior to 1903, Phonographs were used to record on blank cylinders and these locally recorded cylinders were played by phonograph users. Traders selling imported machines were also selling recorded cylinders/discs of foreign numbers. These possibly included some of the recordings of Indian artists like Dr. Harnam Das, Ahmed and Captain Bholanath who were recorded by Frederick William Gaisberg during 1898-1899 at London. These recordings were released as 7" size single-sided recorded discs without paper labels in mid 1899 under the "E. BERLINER'S GRAMOPHONE" label. By this time, Berliner had already setup a record pressing factory at Hanover, Germany with the help of his brother Joseph where copies of records were duplicated from Wax Masters. Many of these records also reached Bombay and Calcutta and Bert Sheaerd's-record "Laughing Song" became very popular. About half a million records of this comic song were sold throughout India.

Burt Shepard
Laughing Song

Columbia Gramophone

A 'Columbia Gramophone' from this period (marketed by the oldest importer of sound machines in Calcutta, M/s T.E. Bevan and Company) had a powerful motorized hand-cranking machine. A stamped inscription on this Gramophone bears the following legends: "T.E. Bevan & Company, Calcutta", "The London Musical Depot", and "Under Appointment of the Governor of Bengal". On one of the parts of The Gramophone is also written "Patent applied for". This machine is an upright Standing-Almirah-Type of machine and has a record storing facility at the front. There are a good number of vertical slots. At the upper portion of the slot are a number of buttons each controlling a slot. On pushing a button, the record pushing system of the corresponding slot is activated and a record is pressed out. Another peculiarity of this machine is that in addition to playing a standard 78 R.P.M. record, it can also play the centre-start Pathe discs at a higher R.P.M. which requires the use of a Pathe Sapphire-tip needle.

At this juncture the Indian market offered a golden opportunity to the sound recording and reproducing industry of Europe and America. With her rich cultural heritage and untapped potential in this field, India offered an immense market to the West- not only could a section of it's population understand the English language, her multilingualism and associated classical as well as folk music also opened the floodgates of opportunity for the adventurous.

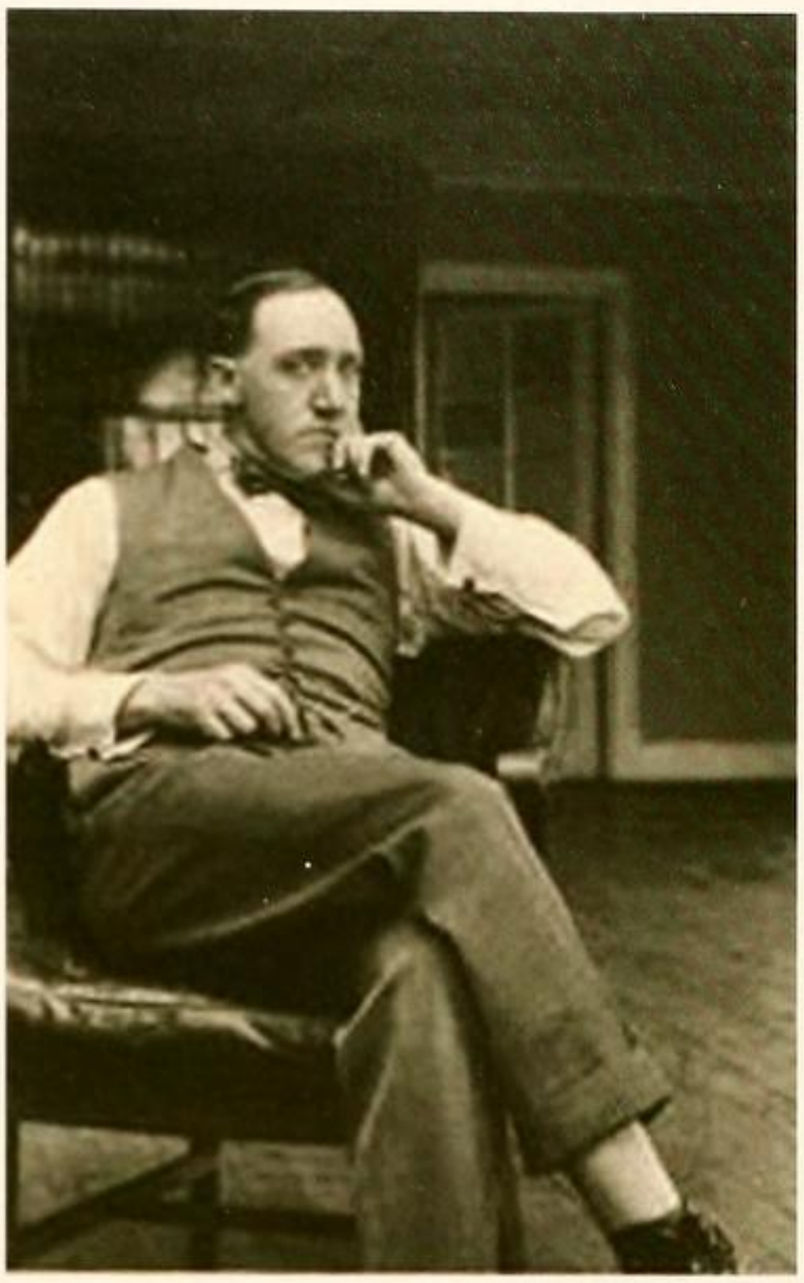
In December 1900, in collaboration with The Lambert Typewriter Company, New York, The Gramophone Company Ltd. incorporated a new company- The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. This arrangement continued till 18th November, 1907, when The Gramophone Company again reverted back to its original name i.e. "The Gramophone Company Ltd."

Till now, no foreign company had thought of coming to India to conduct local content recording sessions. The newly formed The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. which had been selling its foreign pressed discs in India through its local agent The Mutoscope and Biograph Co. of India Ltd., was not happy with its performance and the company's financial problems were also well known. The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.'s representative John Watson Hawd visited India to look into the matter, as a result the agency's agreement with the Mutoscope & Biograph Company of India Ltd. was terminated in September 1901. Thereafter, The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. established its first office at 6/1 Chowringhee in October, 1901 and at 8/2 Dalhousie Square, Calcutta by May 1902.

Now The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. was all set to send its experts on recording expeditions to India. Frederick William Gaisberg and his assistant George

Dillnutt arrived in Calcutta in October 1902. Recording of Indian artists in India commenced on 8th November, 1902.

One basic question before the recording team on arrival to India was: 'Whom to record?'. Their endeavour appeared to be directionless and devoid of proper research and planning. It is evident that it was primarily commercial interest which guided recording companies to record Indian voices. They definitely did not have any special love for the Indian sub-continent and nor were they out to conserve acoustically everything relevant to its national polity, oral history or ethnomusicology systematically for posterity; if at all their enterprise turned into a cultural feat, it was more guided by economic factors i.e. concepts of demand and supply. For Gaisberg, India was a new world of musical and artistic value and a person like him had to erase all memories of the music of European opera houses and concert halls. He even felt that the very foundations of his musical training were being undermined. For him the oriental ear was unappreciative of chords and harmonic treatment and only demanded the rhythmic beat of the drums. In 'The Music Goes Round' (P.54) Gaisberg recollects: “Our agent, Jack Hawd, had arranged a location and had assembled a collection of artists who watched us curiously as we prepared our studio for recording. It was the first time that the talking-machine had come into their lives and they regarded it with awe and wonderment.... I soon discovered that the Anglo-Indians, whom we contacted and who were acting as our agents and factors, were living on another planet for all the interest they took in Indian music. They dwelt in an Anglo-Saxon compound of their own creation, isolated from India. They had their own cricket and tennis clubs, tea-parties and bridge, "Sixteen annas to the rupees." The native bazaars never saw them, and even the Eurasians aped them to the extent of tabooing all Indian society." As Anglo-Indians could not prove satisfactory, Gaisberg himself approached the Superintendent of Calcutta Police, under



George Dillnutt

whose guidance he went to Harrison Road, Calcutta and more specifically the "Classic Theatre". Gaisberg further recollects: "In my search for artists I attended theatres, parties and fetes. Never again will I be able to summon up an equal enthusiasm for Indian music, for one indispensable accompaniment to most songs was a simple missionary's organ. The keys were played with one hand while the other worked a bellows. I found it produced a dull and uninspiring sound, and I soon came to loathe the instrument. Only one or two male singers were recommended to us and these had high-pitched effeminate voices. There was absolutely no admiration or demand for the manly baritone or bass, and in the Orient vocalists in these categories would starve to death."

This clearly shows that recordists of foreign companies lacked the vision to preserve the recordings of living legends belonging to different fields i.e. art, politics, and various other milieu of the subcontinent for posterity. This deprived us of the opportunity of recording many invaluable voices, which could have helped future generations study history more authentically. Their limited tastes failed to

Amarendra Nath Datta

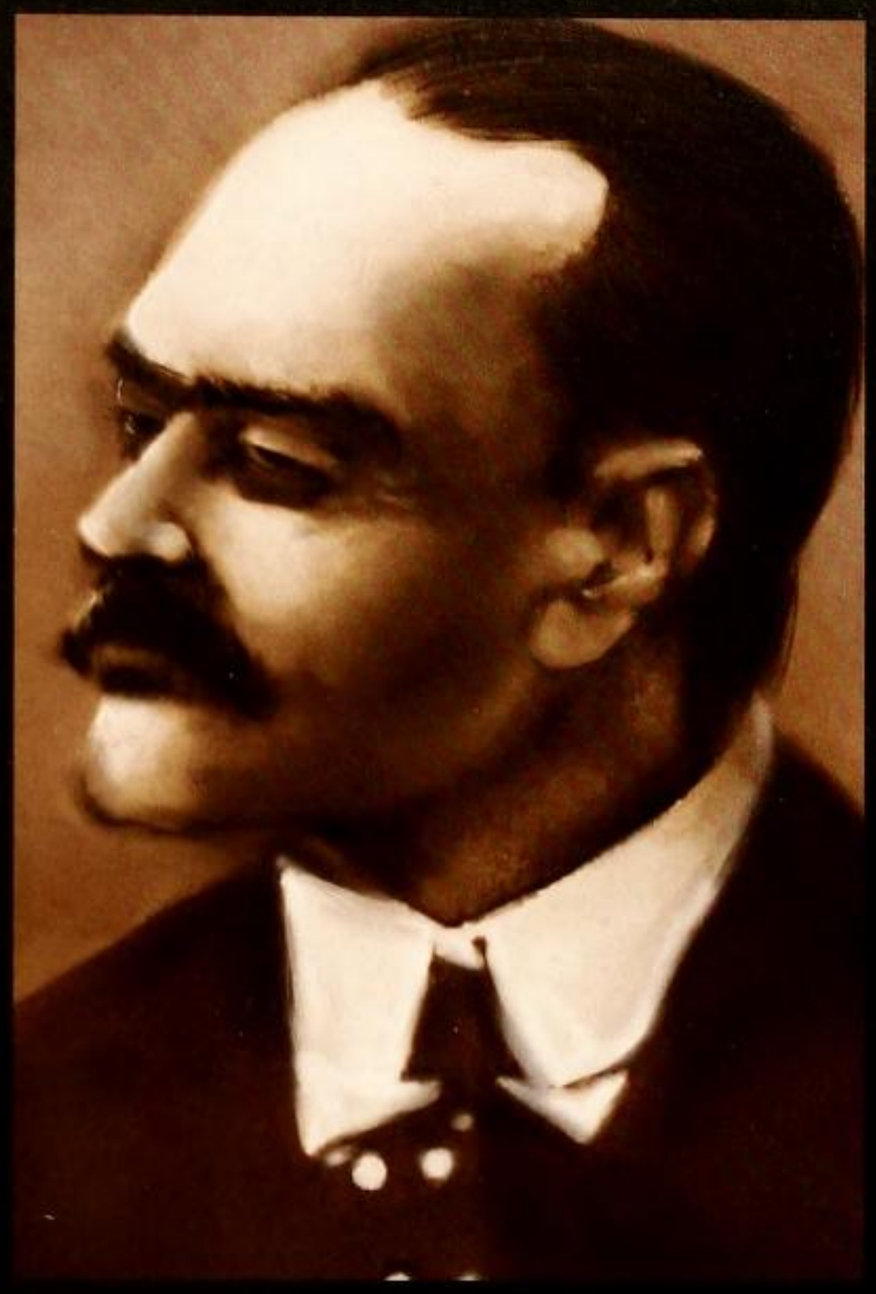
appreciate the significance of the rich musical and dramatic traditions of the Indian sub-continent or the march of history in the form of the freedom movement.

Still, one must acknowledge that with the passage of time, sound recordists and their companies rendered invaluable service to the musical heritage of the sub-continent by recording, though selectively, many great names from that period whose records are today the only remnants of the great musical traditions of the region. As far as the appreciation of the finer nuances of Indian music is concerned, Sound recordists like Gaisberg, Dillnutt, Darby, Porter, Hawd, Noble and their likes cannot be equated with musicologists like Strangway and Augustus Willard. In fact, the recordists did justice to their skills and had they been not left to fend for themselves and had been provided with a group of musicologists rather than some Anglo-Indians who were estranged from Indian realties, perhaps the recordings of many surviving greats of the sub-continent would have found a place in the catalogues of the sound recording companies.

Jamshedji Framji Madan

Despite the fact that Gramaphone Company's local agent, John Watson Hawd, solicited help and guidance from two eminent Indians from the Calcutta theatre world- actor, manager and theatre-owner Amarendra Nath Datta of the Classic Theatre, and Jamshedji Framji Madan (1857-1923), great entrepreneur and controller of the famous Corinthian Theatre-recordings made under their guidance do not reflect the pan- Indian character and hardly any living legend of the musical or political world was recorded during the first recording session under the combined leadership of the trio Gaisberg, Datta and Madan. An examination of the list of 1903 releases of records under 7" size Gramophone records reveals that out of a total of 335 odd releases 158 are of Hindustani (hardly any artists of all India repute) and 101 in Bengali; other Indian languages are either not represented at all or scantily represented. Many records in this series were either of instrumental music or of bands.

One possible reason for such poor representation of our musical greats could be the protectionist approach- many of our musicians did not want to share their knowledge through recordings, some felt it was below dignity to approach recording companies or their patrons for getting themselves recorded. This is exemplified by the fact that while addressing the All



India Music Conference (Delhi - 1918), Chatur Pandit Bhatkhande announced that he had received the permission of His Highness the Nawab Saheb of Rampur (who was also the President of the conference), to get Hori and Dhrupad of the famous Tansen School (of which Rampur had the largest stock) recorded. Unfortunately, despite his fervent appeal to capable and rich Indians, the project did not fructify due to the paucity of funds.

These incidences also squarely put the blame on contemporary Indians for not supporting such projects intellectually or economically. We also miserably failed to start an archive fully dedicated to this cause. Whereas in the west archives like 'Phonogrammarchiv der Osterreichischen Akademic der Wissenschaften' and ' The Berlin Phonogram - Archive' were established as early as in 1899 and 1900 respectively, we have none here even today. As a consequence, the few records that did survive the ravages of time are scattered around the country-prized and cherished as family heirlooms or decaying further in some kabadi's godaam. It is a sad tale of neglect on the part of our society that boasts of a culture going back five thousand years and yearns to emerge as a super-power in the decades to come. We Indians must look into this aspect as well, so our national treasures get preserved.

On November 8, F.W. Gaisberg first recorded the voice of a local Englishman Walter Stanley Burke to test the readiness of his recording equipment. The selection of W.S. Burke was not accidental, he was an amateur actor best known for his comic role of "Bengali Baboo". Burke came to India in 1877 from London to join The Eastern Bengal Railways but soon left his job and became a journalist. A sports enthusiast, Burke was into cycling, shooting, fishing, rowing and was popular within the sports fraternity of Calcutta. He also published a sports-paper "The Indian field", and was founder/associate of a number of sports bodies of Calcutta. His first take of recording of the title "Villikens and his Dinnah" was far from satisfactory and could only be recorded successfully in

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Ram Chunder's Reminiscences By W.S. Burke

the fourth attempt. The recording for the second record was through in the first attempt itself. The first record "Villikens and his Dinnah" (English, record number 12134) was released in 1903 as a 7" size "Gramophone Record". His second record "Ram Chunder's Reminiscences" (English, record number G.C.-11159) was also released in 1903 as a 10" size Gramophone Concert Record.

On the same day Gaisberg also experimented with the voices of two young 'Nautch Girls', fourteen year old Miss Soshi Mukhi and sixteen year old Miss Fani Bala associated with Classic Theatre of Calcutta. Afterwards, Gaisberg recalled their voices as being 'miserable'. Some recordings of Soshi Mukhi issued under 7" size Gramophone records are "Aami Ki Sanjani" (record numbers 13024); " Jiska Pyaar Jaan Liya" (13027) and "Kanha Jeeban Dhan" under 10" size Gramophone Concert Record (record number G.C. 13081). Miss Fani Bala's rendering of "Saral Maney Saral Prane" (record number 13025) was released as a 7" record. These two singers also sang a few duets: "Nime ser tore sarame bashilo-from Hariraj ( Hamlet ) record number 14030 - released as a 7" size record, and "Boleh Dor Hate Ashechi" (Bengalee, G.C.-14083) released as a 10" size. Most of these songs were from popular contemporary Bengalee plays 'Shri Krishna', 'Dole Lila', 'Alibaba' and a famous Parsee Theatre play "Khun-e-Nahak", Munsi Syed Mehdi Hassan Alias Ahshan

Miss Soshi Mukhi
and Miss Fani Bala

Fanibala, Pathe
Disc

Luckhnawee's Urdu adaptation of Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'. Subsequently, Fanibala was also recorded under Pathe label (record no. 45574, Comic Song and record no. 45575-'Aami Tore Chokher Dekha')..

The major achievement of this recording session was F.W. Gaisberg's success in persuading the town's doyen of the corps of singer-dancers, Miss Gauharjan to agree to record her performance. Gaisberg recorded Miss Gauharjan on 11th and 12th November, 1902. Gauharjan or Miss Gauharjan of Calcutta was a very popular and highly accomplished singer who was known to sing in many Indian and foreign languages. Sensing he had hit a gold-mine, Gaisberg recorded her renditions of songs in as many as thirteen languages: Hindustani, Mohammedan (Urdu), Sanskrit, Bengali, Arabic, Turkish, Madrasi, Gujrati, Katchchi, Tailungi, English, Peshawari and Gurmes. Some of the representative numbers from this session were- "Nazar Teri Ho Gai Jigar Ke Par" (Gara Dadra - Hindustani, record numbers G.C.-13061); "Bhalo Basibe Baley Bhalo Basiney" (Bengali, 13146); "Dagar Na Jaani Jaibey Kaise (Dadra-Mohammadan, 13037 )"; "A Dadra Song" (Madrasi, 13039 ); "Jna Bali Champali" (Gujarati,13144 ); "Sob Koi Na Tarda Jhala" (Tailungi, 13145); "My love is like a little bird" (English, 13148); "A Pahil (Pahari) Song" (Peshawari, 13147); "Fee Mashi Naio" (Gurmes, 13143); "Aainta Habibi Aana Garibum" (Arabic, G.C. -

Gauharjan Tailungi Disc

Gauharjan Hindustani Disc

Gauharjan Bengali Disc

Gauharjan of Culcutta

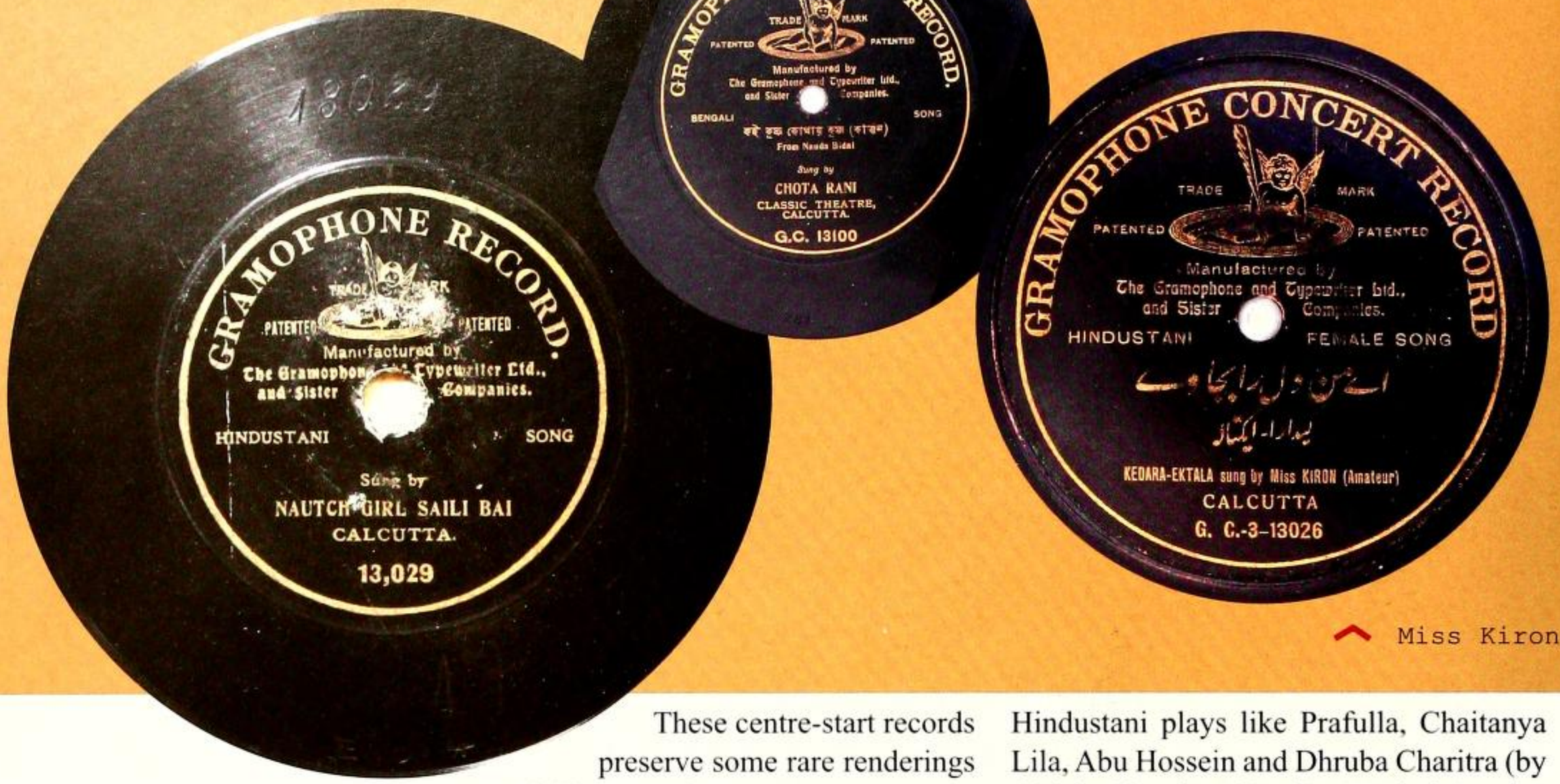
13058 ); "Aayu Na Maal Hain Jo" (Katchchi, G.C. - 13059); "Paad Shahem Majook Yesha" (Turkish, G.C. - 13060); and A Sanskrit song(G.C.-13062). Altogether twenty-nine records were released, nine in 7" size records (Gramophone Records Label) and twenty in 10" size records (Gramophone Concert label). Some of these records like those of Madrasi, Tailungi, Katchchi etc have the distinction of being the first commercial records released in those particular languages.

Another star find of this recording session was Lal Chand Boral. Gaisberg observed that in those days, the tradition among male singers was to sing in imitation of the female voice, Lal Chand Boral and Peara Saheb of Mettiaburj, Calcutta, were two popular singers with "high pitched effeminate voice". The scion of a rich and noble family of Calcutta, Lal Chand Boral (1870-1907) trained in music with the likes of Gopal Chandra Chokrovorty, Kashinath Mishra and Vishwanath Rao (Dhamari). Boral's flourishing career as a recording artist was cut short by his untimely demise in 1907. He was another favorite of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. Calcutta lore has it that the company gifted him a car but by the time the gift was delivered, Boral had passed away. His grief-stricken father returned the gift back. A number of Lal Chand Boral's recordings were also released under the Disque Pathe label.

Peara Saheb of Mettiaburj

Miss.Sailabai
(nautch girl)

Miss Chottarani

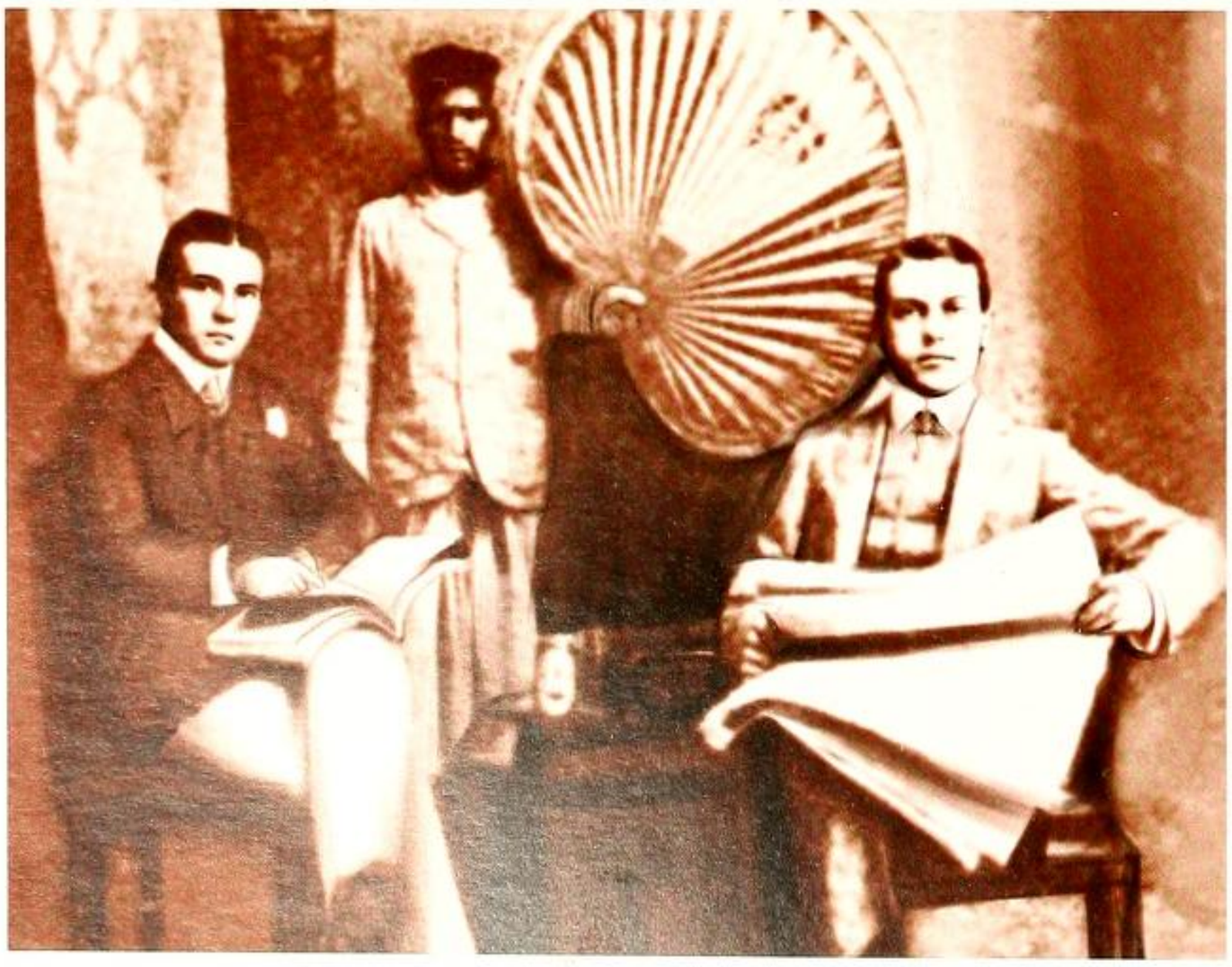



Miss Kiron

These centre-start records preserve some rare renderings of this great singer.

Prominent artists of Calcutta theatres like Miss Sailabai (nautch girl), Miss Binodini, Miss Harimotee, Miss Rani, Miss Bhubneshwari, Miss Mohtal, Miss Mumtaz, Miss Chottarani, Miss Kiron, Panna Lal Sircar, N.C. Ghosh and Master Sambhu were some other big names recorded in 1902. Their recording mainly covered songs from popular Bengali and Hindustani plays like Prafulla, Chaitanya Lila, Abu Hossein and Dhruba Charitra (by Girish Chandra Ghosh); Hariraj (a play after Shakespeare's Hamlet, by Nagendra Nath Chaudhary); Meghnad Badh (by Michael Madusudan Dutt); Fatikjal, Nirmala (by Amarendra Nath Datta); Harish Chandra (by Amrita Lal Basu; and Debi Chaudhurani (by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee). The Hindustani songs were from Parsi theatre plays like Bhul-Bhulaiya (Shakespears's Comedy of Errors adapted by Mehdi Ahsan Lucknawee); Gopichan (by Vishnu Das Bhawe); Dil-Farosh (an adaptation of Shakespear's Merchant of Venice by Mehdi Ahshan Luckhnawee); Chandravali (by Ahshan Lucknawee); and Laila Majnu (by Munshi Seikh Mahmud Raunaque Banarasi). Incidentally, Raunaque Banarasi was a pioneer of intellectual property rights who demanded and achieved the till then lowly munshi's right to be identified with his intellectual contribution to a theatrical production. It was due to his efforts that reading out the names of writers from the stage before the commencement of a play became a practice in Parsee Theatre. Raunaque Banarasi is said to have committed suicide on the stage while acting in the play "Ashique Ka Khoon".

William Sinkler
Darby and Max Hampe



Mr. Lal Chand Boral

Miss Jadumonidassi

Nagendra Nath Babajee

Gaisberg concluded his first vernacular recording session of Calcutta on 6th December, 1902 and left India on 10th December, 1902. In those days recorded masters were carried abroad for processing and pressing. Ironically, before they were heard in India, Indian songs were heard in the sound testing laboratories of Hanover (Germany).

By 1903, the first lot of 550 recorded discs of Indian artists pressed at Hanover was available in the Indian market. Of these 335 recordings were released under the 7" size "Gramophone Records" brand and the remaining 215 numbers under the 10" size "Gramophone Concert Records" brand. These releases were a novelty and the market response was positively rewarding. As the first sound recording expert of Indian numbers on Indian soil, Gaisberg found a permanent place in the cultural history of India.

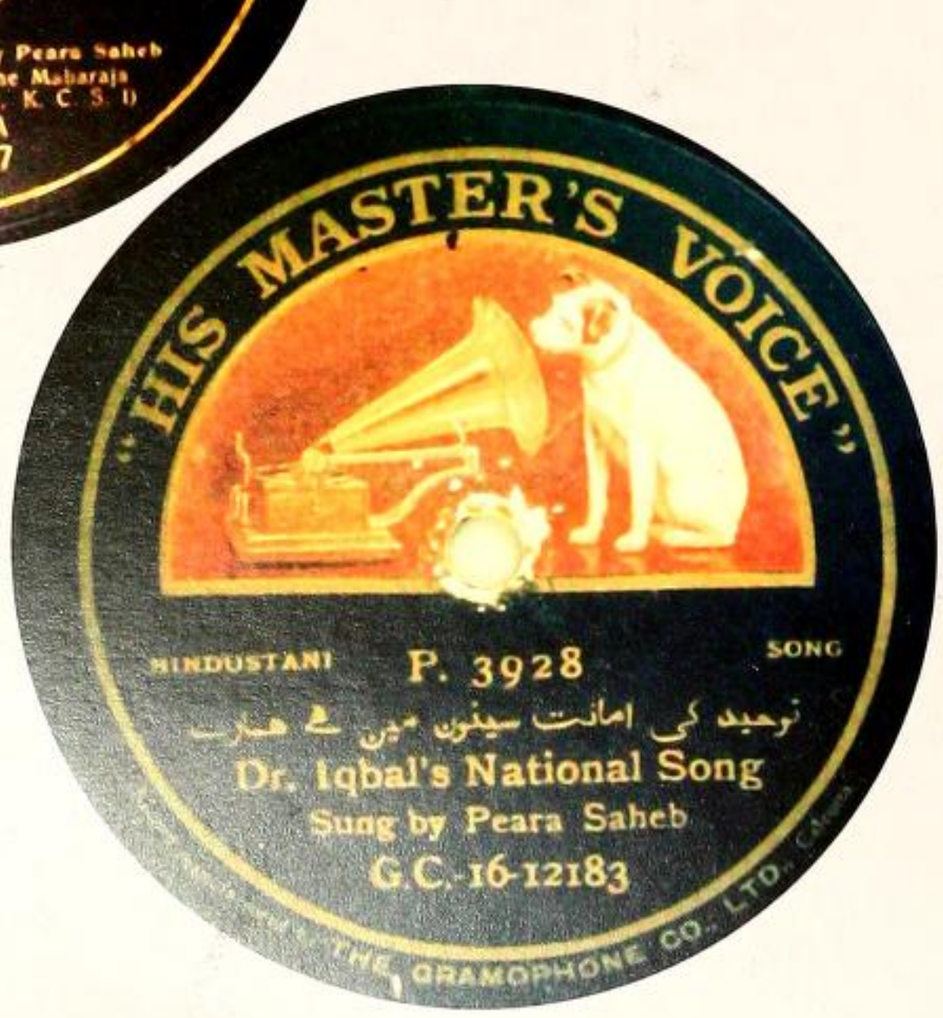
The success of the first recording expedition prompted 'The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.' to dispatch recording experts William Sinkler Darby and Max Hampe to India. This second recording expedition was conducted between December 1904 and March 1905 while Bengal (and India) were simmering over the imminent partition of the province. This time the plan was to cast the net wider and record artists in Delhi, Allahabad, Lahore, Bombay and Madras in addition to Calcutta. The company was eyeing renowned Gharanedar vocalists and instrumentalists patronized by the aristocracy and other connoisseurs of Indian music. Darby's recording of Lal Chand Boral was released under the 12" size 'Gramophone Monarch Records' brand thereby making Boral the first Indian recorded for a 12" size record release. Darby's recording tours of Delhi, Madras, Allahabad, Bombay, and Lahore also attracted many artists who lived near these cities. Recordings in some more popular Indian languages like Punjabi and Canarese (Kannada) were a few new feathers in the hat for the recording experts of this particular recording session.

Chief among the female artist recorded during this session were Miss Nanhijan and Miss Asgarijan (Agra); Miss Keetijan and Miss Bannijan (Meerutt); Miss Jebanjan (Jhajjar); Miss Kalijan and Miss Mumtazjan (Delhi); Miss Allahabandi of Jaipur; Miss Bedana Dassi, Miss Jadumonidassi and Miss Hinganbai (Calcutta); Miss Dhanakoti (Telgu/Conjeevaram); Miss Salem Papa (Madras); Miss Nagaratnam (Canarese and

Narayan Swami Iyer

Misses G.Javille and G.Lambart

Peara Saheb: Gramophone Concert Lable




Peara Saheb: HMV Lable

Telgu/Banagalore); Miss Kishni Julfawali and Miss Kashi Kolworker (Bombay) and Miss Radha of Surat. The prominent male artists recorded were: Prof. Abdul Karim Khan of Baroda; Ustad Kale Khan of Lahore; Ustad Munne Khan of Bareilly; Ustad Imdad Khan and Ustad Barkatullah Khan(Sitar) of Delhi; Ustad Fazal Hussain Khan and Ustad Ahmed Khan of Lahore; Juggan Khan of Ferozpur; Seikh Munna and Talim Hussain of Lucknow; Amul Kanti Ghosh, Nagendra Nath Babajee, Babu Dwijendra Nath Bagchi, Abdul Gafoor, Gopeshwar Banerjee and Aghore Nath Chakrabarty, all from Calcutta; Narayan Swami Iyer (Tamil/Podokottai); Bhai Mehroo of Amritsar; K.H. Bhatta of Bombay; J.A. Fernandez of Goa (Goanese) and Aga Sehargul of Peshawar (Pushtoo).

Another important outcome of this recording session was the release of two 7" (Gramophone record numbers 14345 - Tum to Messiah Mere Aankho Ke Tare - Bhajan; and 14246 - Zara Too Soach Gafil - Gazal) and one 10" sized records in the voice of two non-Indian ladies Misses G.Javille and G.Lambart of Allahabad. These are the first Hindustani recordings of Bhajan and Ghazal in the voice of foreign artists commercially recorded and released in India. The 10" record (record number GC-14167 - Dhan Youban Ka Garab Na Kijiye) became very popular and in the 1906 catalogue of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd., it was mentioned in the Gujarati, Hindustani and Urdu editions that this Bhajan is based on an English tune.

Darby earned the distinction of being the first to record the renowned Peara Saheb of Metiaburj. Peara Saheb was part of the court of His Highness Maharaja Sir Jotendra Mohan Tagore, K.C.S.I. and was also among the personal staff of H.H. Maharaja Sir Prodyot Coomar Tagore. In his book "The Musicians of India" published in 1924, Harendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury, Zamindar of Ramgopalpur, Mymensingh writes: "Peara Saheb is

known to belong to the family of late Nawab Wazid Ali Shah, the ex-king of Oudh who was a state prisoner at Mettiaburj, a suburb of the city of Calcutta. He has his permanent residence there, the postal address of which is Garden Reach, Metiaburj, Calcutta. He is a specialist in the Gazal and Dadra types of vocal music. Formerly he was an amateur, but afterwards he made it a subject of profession. He sings in falsetto, but his finish in performing is really a beautiful and attractive one. He accepted service under the late Maharaja Sir Jatindra Mohan Tagore, of Calcutta and under his patronage Peara Saheb availed himself of the opportunity of learning the art of singing from the famous musicians of India. He has received several gold medals from Mysore, Kashmere, Hyderabad, Bhopal and numerous other Raises (Rich) of India. It is rumoured that Peara Saheb has acquired considerable wealth by this profession. But none of his pupil has been known as yet to have reached any degree of distinction. Several of his songs have been preserved in Pathe Records. The common public has scarcely any chance of meeting his pecuniary demand for his professional service." Afterwards Peara Saheb was also recorded by other labels like pathe Nicole, Ramagraph and Broadcast.

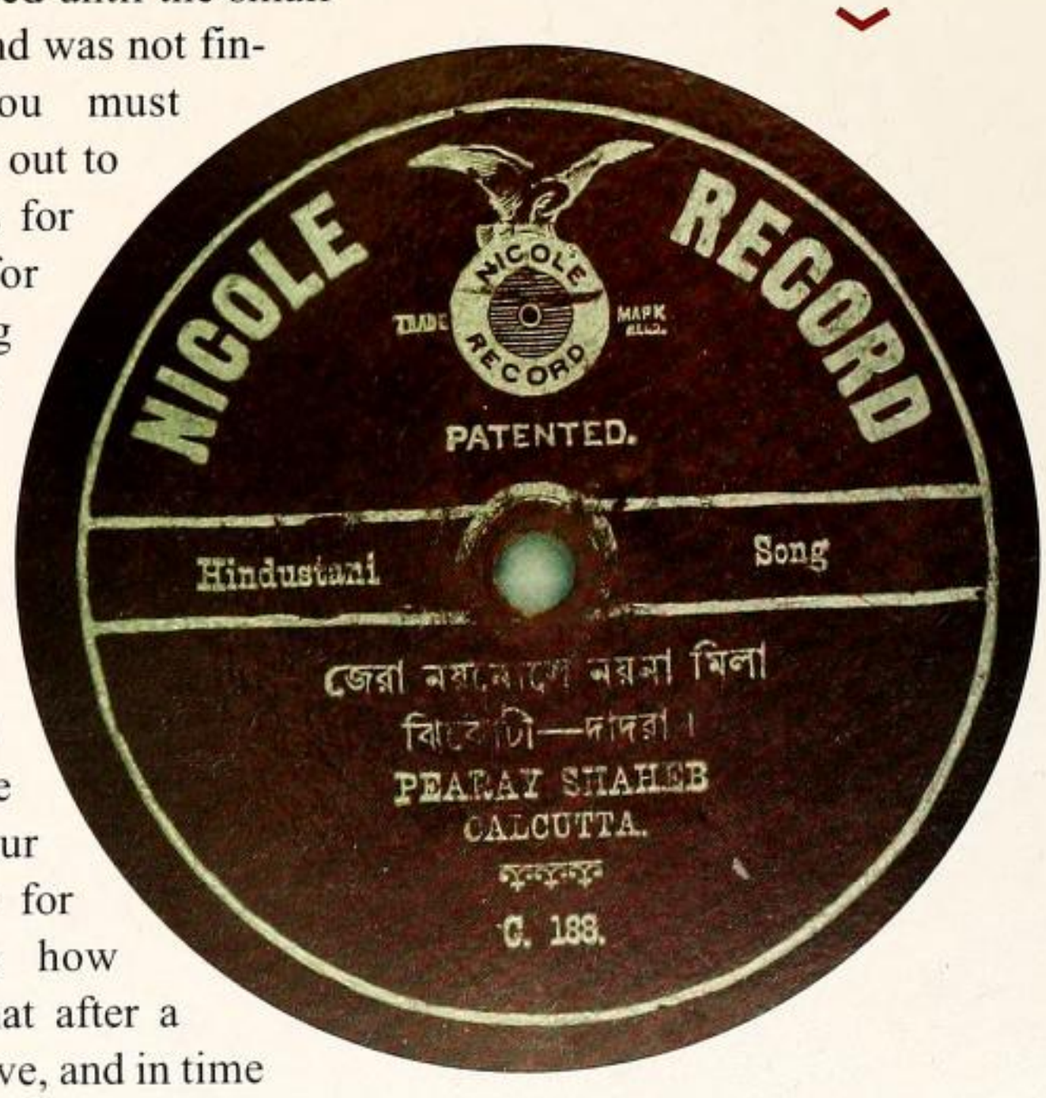
Coverage of a wide range of artists from the classical, semi-classical and theatrical streams and a wide linguistic base gave The Gramophone & Typewriters Ltd. a monopoly of the Indian market. To consolidate its position and to add new titles to its existing catalogue, The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. sent to India a third recording team in 1906-1907. The leader of this team was William Conrad Gaisberg, the younger brother of Frederick William Gaisberg; he was assisted by George Dillnut. This time the recording team planned to cover two more cities, Lucknow and Hyderabad, in addition to Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Lahore covered earlier. William Conrad Gaisberg, recalled his Lucknow tour in his article "The Romance of Recording":

"Lucknow was our first stopping place. On our arrival there, we were met by our Native Agent, who gave us the pleasing information that all hotels were closed. This left at our disposal only the Government Guest House, which one finds at all principal towns or villages for the convenience of European Travellers, but one is only supposed to stay there for a night; further, the accommodation is not so fine as it sounds. A Guest House is entirely bare, as one always travels in India with one's servants and bedding, and all one finds are the four walls and ceiling - and these generally not very clean. As we intended to make a long stay, our Agent suggested that we take a bungalow. This idea was not a welcome one to us as it meant the hiring of a cook and house servants; eventually, however, we had to do this-but the days of house furnishing we will pass over quickly.

I have painful experiences of our first singing party, which started about ten o'clock at night and lasted until the small hours of the morning, and was not finished even then. You must remember that we went out to India to furnish records for the natives, not for Europeans, so that during our whole tour we were associated practically entirely with the natives, and during this first party of ours our bungalow was crowded with natives. European Chairs were not used; we all had to sit on our haunches. Just try this for ten minutes and see how painful it is! I know that after a while, I could hardly move, and in time

Peara Saheb: Ramagraph Lable

Peara Saheb: Nicole Lable



Miss Janki Bai alias Chappanchuri

Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi

it became absolutely agony. But still, all our native friends hugely enjoyed what to them was a treat."

He further says :

"The Recording at Lucknow lasted three or four weeks, and everything went off as well as could be expected. A number of artists came from Delhi, Meerut, and several smaller towns. We made about 200 different records. We used to start recording at six o'clock in the morning and continue on till the hottest part of the day came, when we would rest until about five o'clock, and then we continued recording until about ten o'clock or eleven o'clock at night. Of course, we couldn't hold Recording Sessions such as these in Europe- to have our singers waiting our convenience and living right outside our Recording Rooms; so that when we were finished with one artist, all we had to do was to arrange for the other to come right in".

Gaisberg's account presents the dismal conditions under which recordings were conducted in those days, especially at places where the company didn't have its own studios. Worst was the plight of artists who had to wait for long hours to get recorded. This humiliating experience must have been made bearable either by a lucrative remuneration (in some cases Rs.300/- for a recording session) or an intense desire to have one's renderings recorded. However, stories of some reputed singers and Ustads turning down offers from recording companies are legion and perhaps this was one reason why we do not find records of many great Pandits and Ustads of Indian classical music who had been around when this technology was being introduced.

Gaisberg's team was eagerly welcomed wherever it went- for the local authorities it was a matter of pride to be recognized as centers of artistic excellence by a British recording major, they saw in this an opportunity to promote their areas as centers of culture and affluence. Gaisberg narrates his team's arrival in Hyderabad: "the one thing that stands out brightest is our first elephant ride in India. Three state animals were sent to us from the Nizam's own stables, which we very proudly mounted, but I can assure you we had not gone far before we willingly gave "backsheesh" to the native drivers to allow us to descend, we were so "seasick". We arranged with our interpreter that he should go a roundabout way back to the stables so as not to offend his Highness".

This recording tour added a number of new stars to the list of artists recorded so far: Miss Janki Bai alias Chappanchuri and Miss Munnijan of Allahabad; Miss Amirjan of Panipat; Husnajan, Wazirjan, Sheokanwar Bai of Banaras; Miss

Doannijan of Delhi; Miss Allah Rakhi of Jammu; Miss Jhandi of Jhelum; Miss Wahidjan and Miss Malkajan of Agra; Miss Matorjan of Kasur( now in Pakistan); Miss Nawabjan of Aligarh; Mohammed Bandi of Patna; Miss Khurshedjan of Kanpur; Miss Nazirjan of Bulandshahar; Miss Oomdajan, Miss Biggajan, Miss Nunnijan and Miss Gafooranjan of Hyderabad; Ustad Bakir Hussain Khan of Lucknow; Ustad Choonoo Khan of Rampur; Ustad Alladiya of Hashi(Hansi). Also recorded was the great theatre man of Bengal, Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi; other Bengali artists recorded during this session were Mukund Chandra Nandan; Nogendra Bala Dassi; Nara Sundari Dassi; Pulin Bihari Mitter; Narain Chandra Mukherjee; Mohendra Nath Banerjee and Gopal Chandra Singh Roy - originator of comedy songs of Bengal. Prof. S.S. Manohar from Bombay was another famous person recorded during this tour.

The highlight of this recording expedition was the recording of 'Vande Mataram' in the voice of R.N. Bose for 12" size Matrix with catalogue number 012112. This recording was made in May 1906 and was released in the market by September 1906. Otherwise just a song in Bankimchandra Chatterjee's novel 'Anandmath', in the emotionally charged backdrop of the partition of Bengal in 1906, 'Vande Mataram' became the war cry of millions of Indians in their struggle against British oppression in India. Prior to this, Pathe (H. Bose & Co.) and Nicole labels had already made records of 'Vande Mataram'. However by 9th December 1908, sale of records and singing of the song 'Vande Mataram' was proscribed as being anti-British and seditious in nature. All recording companies had to withdraw these discs from public sale and most of them were destroyed.

One more important feature of W.C.Gaisberg's recording tour was the recording of an immensely popular harmonium player and vocalist Mohammed Hussain of Nagina because this later led to India's first breach of trust suit in the area

Mukund Chunder Nandan

Narain Chunder Mukherjee

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of music recording, a forerunner of the contemporary monopoly disputes. Mohammed Hussain's father Seikh Nathoo was a famous Qawwal of Nagina, a town in the Bijnor district of present day Uttar Pradesh. Mohammed Hussain had been getting recorded since 1905 and till 1915, had been recorded by many companies who marketed his records under their labels by variously modifying his name as Mohammed Hussain, Hussain Khan and Mohammed Hussain 'Harmonium Master'. In 1907 Mohammed Hussain entered into an exclusive agreement with The Gramophone Company for recording with them for three consecutive years on a retainership basis. Under the agreement Hussain was to receive a sum of rupees sixty per year, in addition he was to be paid recording fee at the rate of rupees twelve per recording. The company planned to make thirty recordings with him each year which in a span of three years would have fetched him a total income of Rs.1260/-. During the period of the agreement Mohammed Hussain was not to record for any other company.

However, "The Gramophone Co. Ltd. learnt that during 1908, Mohammed Hussain had made a number of recordings with Pathe Freres on behalf of Hague, Moode & Co. of Delhi and Lucknow; The James Manufacturing Co., Bombay and to Valabhdas Lakhmidas & Co., Bombay, through The James Manufacturing Co., Bombay. The recordings made with the Bombay companies were said to have been made during Mohammed Hussain's visit to Bombay in April-May 1908. The Gramophone Co., Ltd. filed a suit in the High Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal on 22 March 1909 against The Pathephone & Cinema Chine, Calcutta. Soon after The Gramophone Co. Ltd. also lodged suits against The James Manufacturing Co., T.S. Ramchunder & Bros. and The

Wellington Cycle Co. in the High Court of Judicature at Bombay. By April 1910, the lawyers of The Gramophone Co. Ltd. had obtained evidence from Mohammed Hussain to the effect that he admitted being induced by the several sound recording companies but on the 'thin' side of his reason for providing these recordings was that he had given recordings to the several companies concerned-that he had not given to The Gramophone Co., Ltd., (in February 1907, March 1908, nor in December 1909). While the suits were being contested The Wellington Cycle Co. had given up their interest in producing disc records or at least sold off their recording and reproducing machinery to the James Manufacturing Co., with the result that the suit against the company was dropped. The case against The Pathephone & Cinema Chine Co., Calcutta was amicably settled on 7 May 1910, with Pathephone agreeing to:1. destroy all the master recordings and matrices (said to be 100 titles), 2. Pathephone to pay The Gramophone Co., Ltd's cost in the suit, and 3. to deliver up all discs reproducing the voice of Mohammed Hussain still in Pathephone 's possession."[8]

A cursory glance at this artist's records issued under different labels reveals that The Gramophone Company mentions his name as Mohammed Hussain in all its three labels i.e. Gramophone Concert (Black Label), Gramophone concert (Yellow, High-priced label) and CINCH (Low-priced label); in case of James label, Jamesoperaphone, the costlier variety, writes his name as Mohammed Hussain, whereas the low-priced numbers under the label "Jamesopera Record" spell the name of the artist as 'Hussain Khan"; Mohammed Hussain's records under Ramagraph labels identify him as "Mohammed Hussain Harmonium Master". This name should not be confused with that of 'Hossein Khan' appearing on Gramophone Concert Record (number GC-7-17094 ; 'Violin solo' a Persian number). This record, manufactured at Hayes, England, is not of Mohammed Hussain, Naginawale, as he never was a Violinist.

Disque Pathe is said to have made a good number of recordings with Mohammed Hussain. In his article "In the matter of Mohamed Hussain (Naginawale), published in 'The Record News', SIRC, Vol. 16, October 1994" Michael Kinnear states:

"the vertical-cut discs issued by Pathephone Cinema Chine, Co., Calcutta, on 11 inch 'disque PATHE' (pressed at the Pathe Freres factory, Forest, Belgium) present an interesting aspect in that they are labelled not as by Mahomed Hussain-but a-MAHAMUD (OR MAHMUD) KHAN of Najibabad-which is in fact a town just a few miles north of Nagina-also in the Bijnor district. How many of the supposed 100 titles recorded by Mahomed Hussain for 'Pathe' were issued is not known-but a few of the known titles are common to titles issued in by The Gramophone Co., Ltd."

However, in my opinion, Mohamud Khan of Najibabad whose Pathe record was issued under record number 45338 was not Mohammed Hussain. Pathe Disque released record numbers 36738 and 36740 of 'Mohomed Hossain' i.e. Mohammed Hussain under his name and not as Mohamud Khan of Najibabad. The 36000 series of Pathe Disque were released as H. Bose & Pathe disque Records which in fact were recorded by H. Bose & Company. Since M/s Pathe Freres had introduced the 'Disque Pathe' brands only in March 1908, it is unlikely that after signing of contract with The Gramophone Company Ltd., M/s Pathe Freres would have released records of one artist under two names.

During 1908, two major events took place in the history of The Gramophone

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Mohammed Hussain, Naginawale, India's first Artist to face breach of trust suit with diffrent Comapanies (1 to 9)

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Manoda Sundari Dassi

Company Ltd.: its title in India was changed from The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. to The Gramophone Company Ltd. and it opened a record-pressing factory at Sealdah, Calcutta on 18th December, 1908. The most likely reason behind this shift seems to be the price war of the recording companies- while the price of Gramophone records (single-sided) in those days ranged between Rs.2 and 12 Annas to Rs.3 and 12 Annas, Beka, Sundisc and Odeon labels (double-sided type) were marketed at only Rs.2 per record. This was a serious challenge to the monopolistic hold of The Gramophone Company Ltd. The Swadeshi Movement's call to boycott foreign manufactured goods could have been another reason to establish a record-pressing facility in India. And of course, India offered cheap labour and abundant basic raw material for records, shellac. Last, but not least was the growing demand for records of the Indian repertoires in India. All said and done, it was prudent to setup the recording facility in India itself as it was more cost effective than sending recorded masters to Germany (Hanover) and shipping copies back to India for sale.

The Sealdah record pressing factory of The Gramophone Company Ltd. was called "Bajakhana' by the locals and soon it was meeting the production demands for records for the entire Asia region except China and Japan. The record pressing facilities created by local enterprises like Binapani Recording Company, Calcutta and The Wellington Cycle Company, Bombay did pose a challenge to the record pressing facility of The Gramophone Company Ltd., but they were short-lived.

Seeing the ever increasing demand for gramophone records, in the concluding months of 1910 Frederick William Gaisberg and William Sinkler Darby conducted another recording expedition on behalf of The Gramophone Company Ltd. Both recording experts conducted separate recording sessions at various places in the country. One of the basic purposes of this session was to explore the possibility of releasing low-priced records to enable the company to compete with other low-priced versions of labels like Beka Grand Records, Sundisc Records and Odeon Records. With the introduction of low priced records, The Gramophone Company Ltd. expected to capture a yet

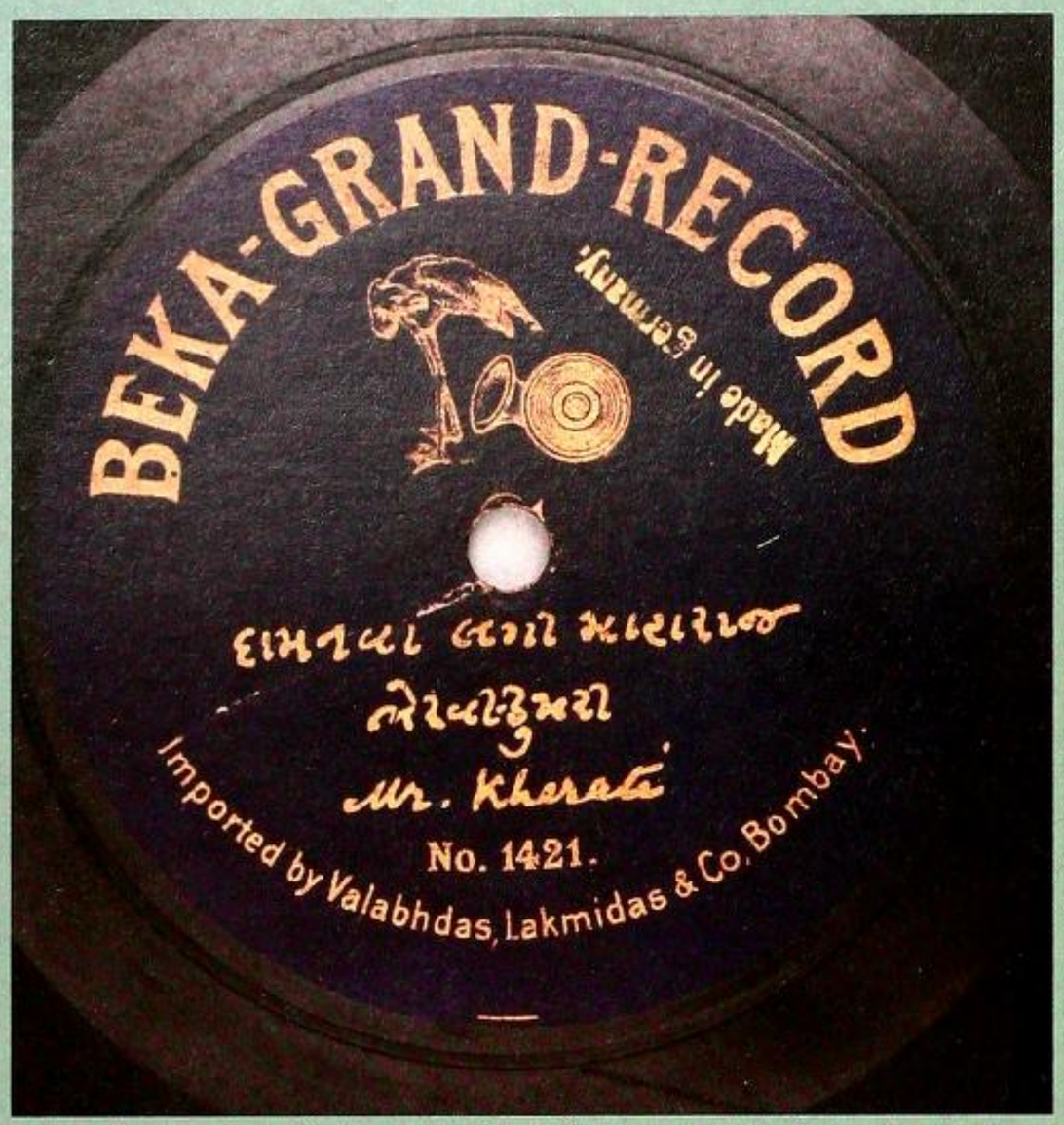
'CINCH' Disc

Zonophone Disc

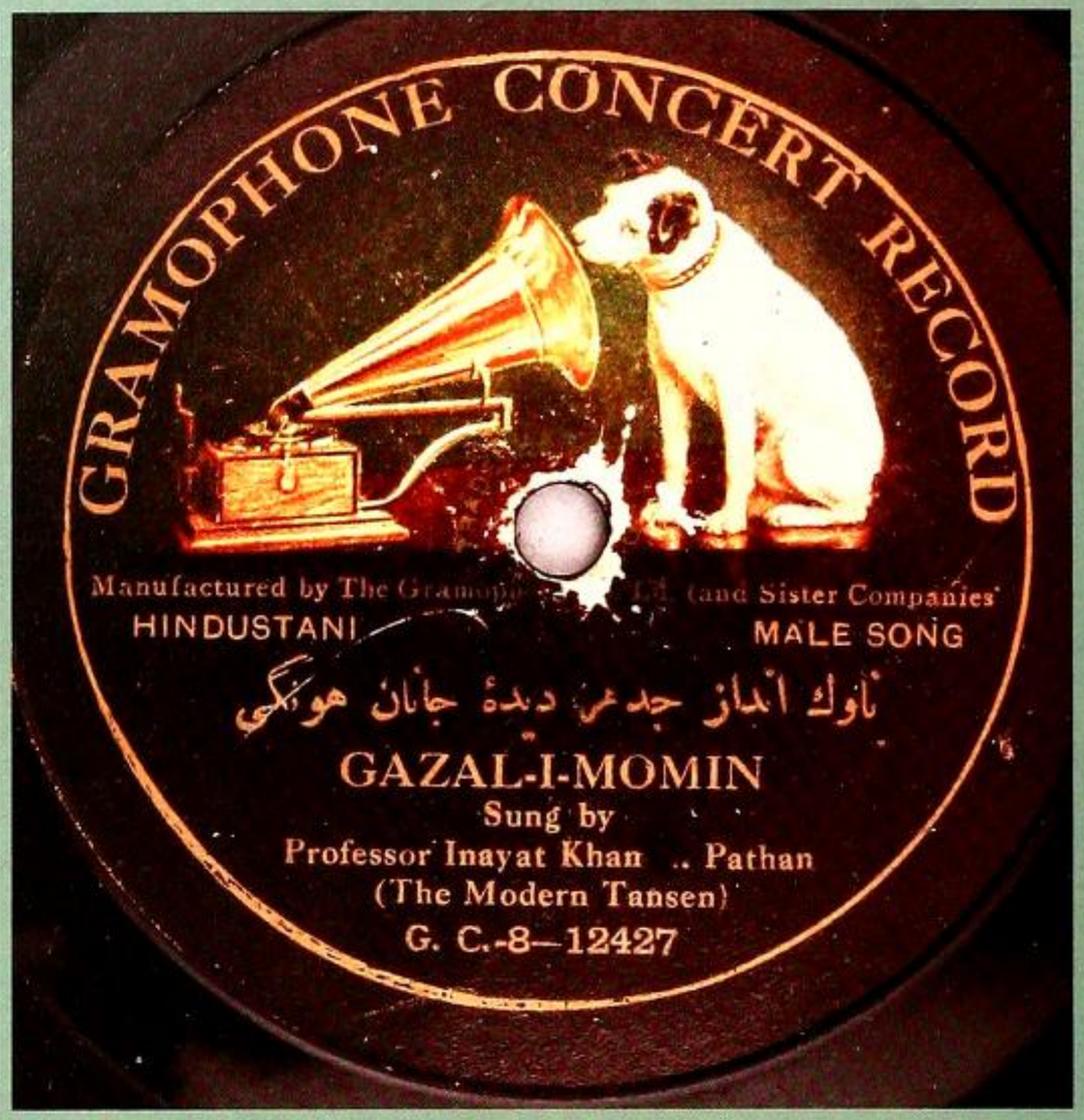
untapped section of the populace that thirsted for artists closer to its sensibilities.

In the wake of this recording session many 'Zonophone' numbers were introduced at the rate of Rs.2 and 12 Annas to remain competitive. The Gramophone Company Ltd. also introduced another low-priced label 'CINCH' priced at Re. 1 and 4 Annas. 'CINCH' was the first Indian record with the price of the record printed on its label and provides documentary evidence of the price-war, marketing strategy and market management of the period. Obviously the customer was not required to pay more than the printed price and the wholesale and retail dealers were paid commissions under a separate arrangement. Printing of the price on the record during the first decade of the twentieth century is a forerunner of the present day practice of printing of maximum retail price (MRP) on various consumer products.

Manoda Sundari Dassi was the first artist to be released under the Zonophone label. These records of hers were the result of the marathon recording session of 1908- 1910. Another famous artist recorded during this session was the famous Coimbatore Thayee who had been paid a sum of Rs.4000/- for her recordings. All her recordings were issued on "Violet-label discs" giving her a celebrity status, the only artist on the Company's list given such honour. Other distinguished artists recorded by Dillnutt and Gaisberg were: Ustad Mustaq Hussain Khan of Rampur ; (a fine vocalist, who was also recorded by Beka lablel); Dinabai Ferozshah Mistry of




Kherati Ali




Inayat Khan R. Pathan

Miss Punnamoyee Dassi

Parsee Theatres and the great future Sufi musician from the house of Ustad Maula Bux of Baroda, Prof. Inayat Khan R. Pathan; Miss Achhan Bai; Miss Gauhar of 'Parsee Theatres'; Ilahijan of Patiala; Miss Jawahar Bai of Lucknow; Miss Piarijan alias Rampiari of Bombay; Sardar Begum of Patiala; Miss Hafijanjan of Saharanpur; Miss Sunderjan of Hyderabad and Miss Zohrabai of Agra. Also recorded were renowned Bengali artists Amarendra Nath Datta; Balai Das Sil; Chitaranjan Goswami; Dwijendra Lal Roy (Poet-Composer of Tappa-Khayal in Bengali); Manmath Nath Dutt; Brajo Bala Dassi; Miss Girindra Kumari Dassi; Khetromoni Dassi; Miss Krishna Bhamini (Teacher of the

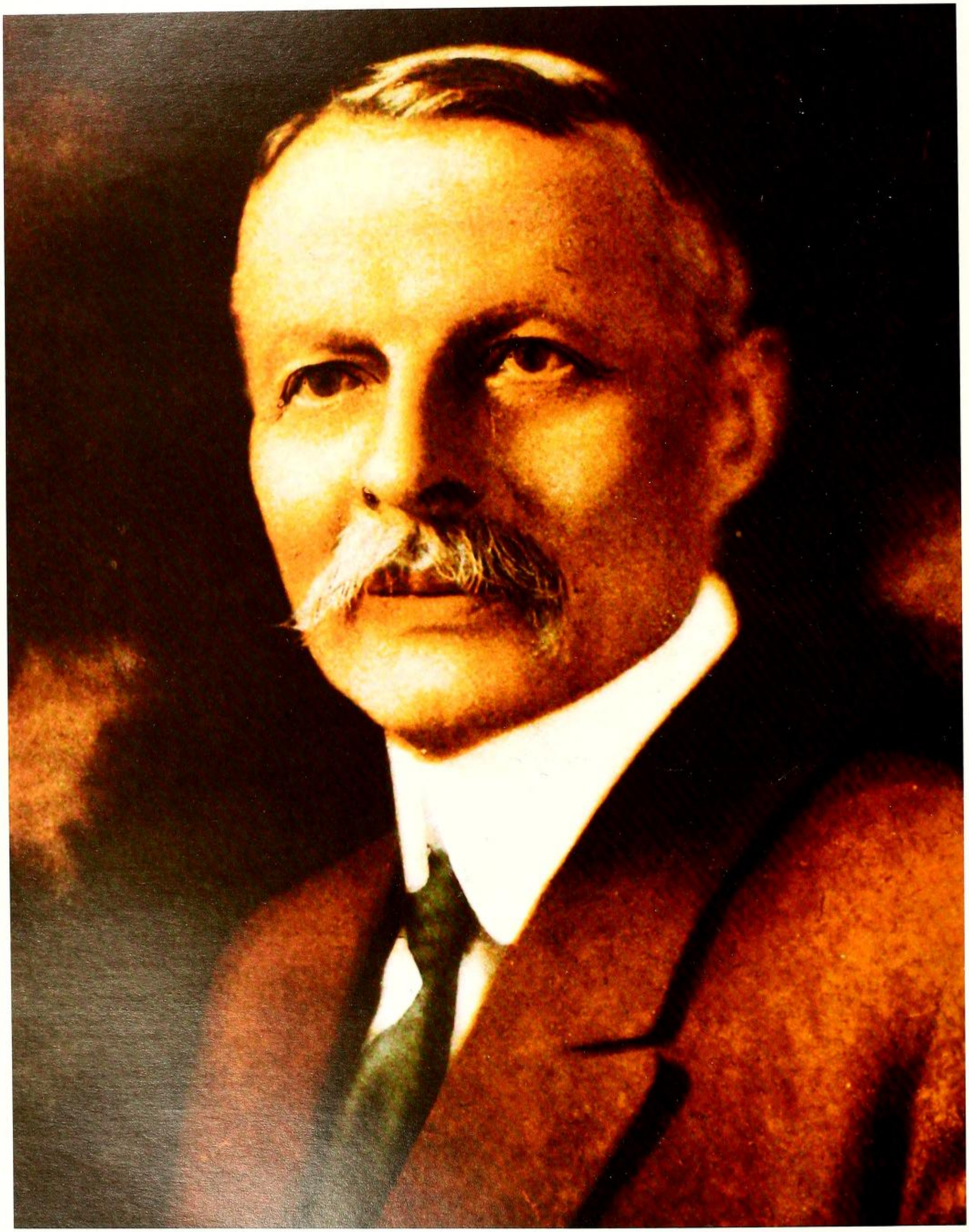
Gangadhar

Miss Pachumoni Dassi

great tappa singer Kalipada Pathak); Miss Kusum Kumari; Miss Nagendra Bala Dassi; Miss Nolinee Sundari Dassi; Miss Pachumoni Dassi; Miss Punnamoyee Dassi alias Miss Roma Bai; Miss Purna Kumari Dassi. Following the European trend, performances of bands like The Jhalawar State Band; Bhavnagar Band; Jehangir Band of Amritsar and Surat Band or Razak's Surat Band were also recorded.

Apart from The Gramophone Company a number of other Indian and foreign recording companies were also recording and releasing their products in the Indian market. Many of them introduced artists who either did not give their recordings to The Gramophone Company or had not been recorded for other reasons. Unfortunately, for want of complete information and catalogues of artists recorded under these labels (Nicole, Pathe, Jamesopera, Sundisc, Ramagraph and Beka-Grand). Indian recordings are also found in 11" Oden labels. It is difficult to create a complete picture of recorded artists. Still, by scanning records, pamphlets and literatures of these companies at least a tentative discography could be attempted. Tentative, because the work of creating a complete discography becomes difficult in view of the closure of most of these companies by 1920 and non-survival of the records produced by them. These records were destroyed because a large number of them were recycled for painting, toy-making, making of 'paan' containers or were melted to obtain purified lac to meet the requirement of shellac during World War-II. Thus was lost a crucial chapter of the socio-cultural history of our country. Today, any attempt to create even the outline of a discography of Indian recordings will have to rely on a collection of some of these available records and materials.

Krishnabhamini



Charles Pathe

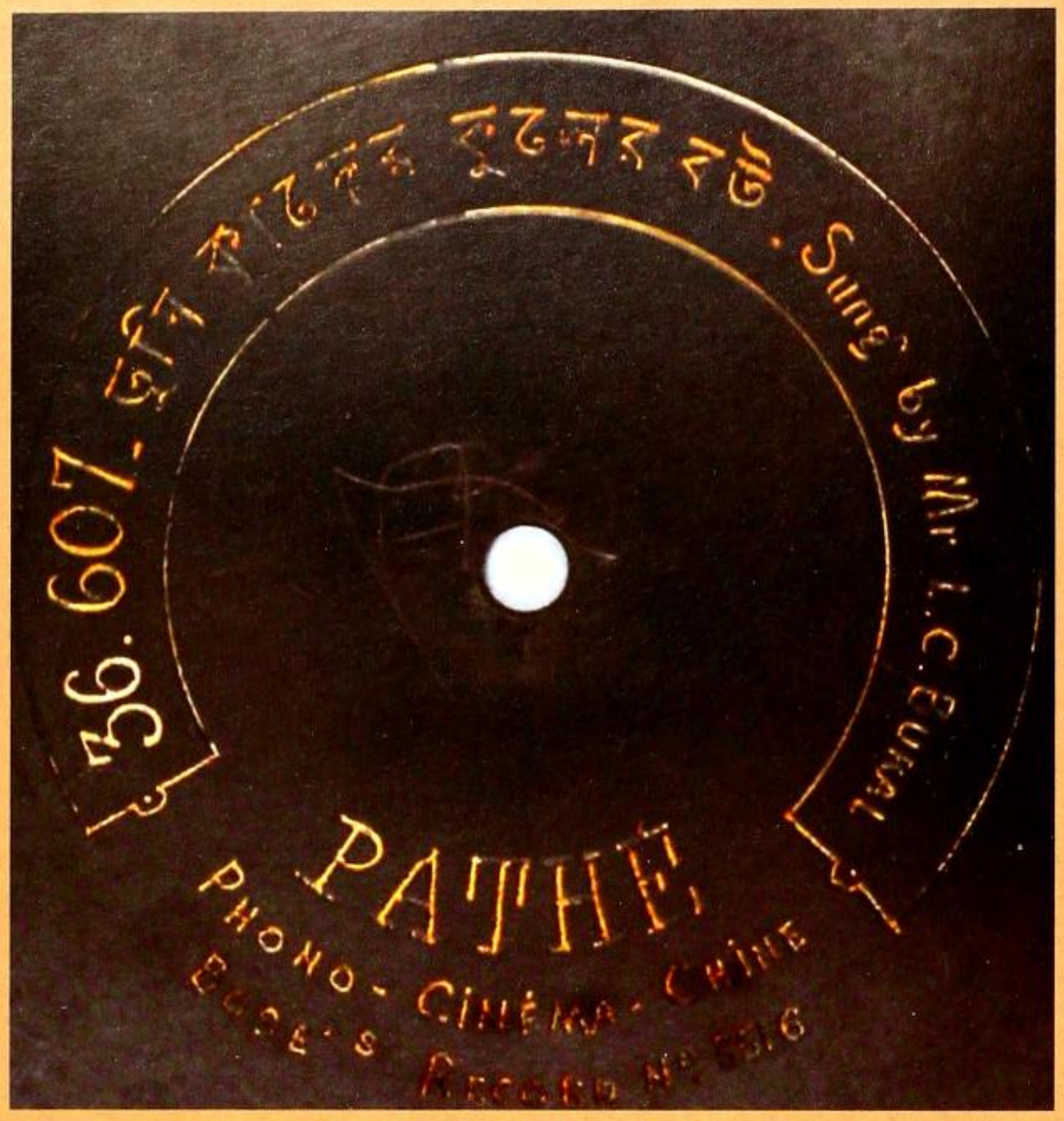
# DISQUE PATHE

The credit for introducing the 'Disque Pathe' label goes to Emile and Charles Pathe, two brothers who ran a café or bistro in Paris. They saw Edison's Phonograph at the annual Vincennes fair and in order to attract more customers to their cafe, imported one such machine and installed it there. This step of theirs opened unexpected business opportunities for the brothers- customers demanded the phonograph and blank cylinders. The enterprising brothers established a small factory in the Parisian suburb of Chatou to produce cylinder blanks for Phonographs. They tried to get a license to deal in Edison's Phonographs but failed. The Pathe brothers therefore developed a machine of their own with the help of a local engineering company of Belleville. The business was brisk and the Pathe Freres Company was founded in 1896 to cater to the ever increasing demand for their products. They adopted the famous Pathe Cockerel, 'Le Coq' trade mark, for their phonographs and cylinders.

In the beginning 'Pathe' ran 10 wax-cylinders at a time to record ten copies of a title during one recording session but soon it developed a duplicating process by means of a mechanical Pantograph process from large-diameter masters. In 1899 Pathe had an inventory of 1500 recorded titles which grew to 12000 titles by 1904. By that year its cylinders reigned supreme in the European market, the company employed 3,200 workers producing 1,000 phonographs and 50,000 cylinders a day. It had also established offices and studios at London, Milan and Moscow.

Pathe entered the disc manufacturing business in 1906 and used the vertical 'hill and dale' recording method. Its discs were released in 8½" as well as 11" sizes and were played at a speed of 90 to 100 R.P.M. These centre start discs were not pressed but were copied using large pantographs from a large master disc and required a special sound head suitable for vertical movement and equipped with a spherical tipped "Sapphire Stylus". In 1909 Pathe introduced 20" size discs which played at 120 R.P.M. on a machine called "Pathe Majestic".

Pathe discs released in India did not use paper labels, the details of recordings were hand-etched in the centre of the record with white paint filled in to make the




L. C. Baral

Gopal Chandra Sinha Roy

details readable. The paper jackets of Pathe records used to notify: "That Pathe discs do away with the necessity of a needle; that Pathe discs must be used in conjunction with PATHE'S SPECIAL Sapphire diaphragm; that Pathe's discs begin from the centre, place the sapphire point in the first groove after the start; that the Pathe's discs should be heard at a speed ranging from 90 to 100 revolutions per minutes and that every good disc machine will take Pathe's Disque, the diaphragm only requires changing".

Initially Pathe's interests in India regarding the sale of cylinders and phonographs were represented by Hemendra Bose. Till 1906, H. Bose's Records and Pathe's New Model Phonographs manufactured by them in Europe were sold in India. But the Company wanted to promote its machine "Pathephone" in India and so it opened a new office at 7, Lindsay Street Calcutta by 1907. The Pathe Freres agent also set up an office at 55, Benetinck Street Calcutta and appointed J.F. Maden to handle their cinema products, which prior to 1908 was their primary interest in India. H. Bose was appointed agent for the cylinders and phonographs in India. The subsidiary was known as "PATHE PHONO CINEMA CHINE" in 1908. Between 1908 and 1910 Henry Lachappelle, M.M. Saife and T.J. Theobald Noble conducted many recording sessions in India on behalf of the company. Its first release in 1908 were based on recordings made earlier by Hemendra Bose and so these records indicated the inscriptions "H. Bose", a separate H. Bose record sub-number and a separate Disque Pathe number.

Known as center-start-discs, Pathe discs played from the centre and moved towards the edge. They were manufactured in 8½", 11½", 14" and 20" diameter sizes but the Indian releases were, by and large, confined to 8½" and 11½" sizes. As recordings progressed, Pathe released a number of record series like 36000, 35000, 5000, 33000, 45000, 46000 and 49000.

Though a comprehensive list of Pathe recordings of Indian repertories is still unavailable, some important artists who were recorded under this label were: Miss Gauhar Jan, Shri. L. C. Baral, Miss Manoda Sundari Dassi, Miss Kiron Soshi, Shri. H. L.Biswas, Shri. S. N.Majumdar (alias Baku Babu), Shri. B. N. Banerjee, Shri. M .N. Datta, Shri R. N. Banerjee, Shri.Gopal Chandra Singh Roy, Shri Rabindranath Tagore, Shri Dwijendra Lal Roy, Miss Nogen (Boochi), Shri Satish Chandra Roy, Miss Nori (Star Theatre), Shri S. N. Moitra, Shri J. K. Raksit, Miss Poorna Kumari, Shri Peara Saheb, Miss.Fanibala, Shri Kaliprasanna Kavya Bisharad, all from Calcutta; Miss Janki Bai of Allahabad. Shri Billaithu, Miss Choti Maina, Miss Vidyadhari Bai, Ustad Gauri Shankar Misra, Miss Noor Jahan, Miss Raj Kanwar Bai, all of Banaras; Shri Balgandharva, Mr.Gokhale of Poona, Shri Karandikar from Maharashtra; Shri Piroz Shah Mistry and Mr. Baliwala (owner of the Baliwala Grand Theatre, Bombay) from Parsi Theatres; Miss Kali Jan of Delhi; Miss Zebanjan of Jhajjhar; Miss Gulzarjan of Jammu; Miss Husna Jan of Saharanpur; Miss Husna and Miss Ramdulari Bai of Ghazipur; Miss Azmat Jan of Sandila; Miss Sultan Jahan; Miss Mohammadi Jan, Miss Wazir Jan, Miss Ladli Jan, Miss Mehdi Jan, Miss Dhanoo Bai, Shri Talim Hussain all from Lucknow; Shri Mohammad Hussain Nagina; Shri Mohamud Khan Najibabad; Master Baboo; Miss Bibhawati, Miss Godawari; Ustad Abdul Karim of Firozabad (Multan-Pakistan); Shri Veeraswamy and Ramdoss (Telgu Flute and Clarinet); and the great Ustad Puttan Khan of Atrauli.

Piroz Shah Mistry

Miss Ramdulari Bai of Ghazipur

Veeraswamy and Ramdoss

Ashutosh Auddy,
Calcutta

Mr. L.C. Bural, Calcutta

# NICOLE RECORDS

Nicole Freres Company was founded in 1815 at Geneva, Switzerland. In 1817, it became a limited company and established an office at London by the name of The Nicole Freres Ltd., 21 Ely Place, London. George Burt and Carl Krieger, two directors of the company got a patent granted in their name in June 1903 for making blanks for cylinders and disc records and consequently the Nicole Records Company Ltd. was established in July 1903. These newly patented Nicole Discs were made of compressed cardboard with a chocolate brown celluloid coating. The details were printed in the centre of the record, in some cases a separate printed paper label contained record details.

Nicole records were released as 7" and 10" diameter single as well as double-sided records. During 1903-04 the company also introduced in the market various models of its own record-size specific machines "Nicole-Popular-7" turntable" and "Nicole-Standard-10" turntable", specially made for playing 7" and 10" sized records. Other models were "Nicole-Colonial" and "Nicole-Drawing Room Model" for both size discs.

In 1904, the firm M/s M.L. Shaw of 23/5 Dharmatalla Street, Calcutta, was appointed the authorized agent for Nicole Records and Nicole-phone Talking Machines for India. John Watson Hawd, formerly of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd., joined

J.D. Sakhia, Bombay

Miss Hena and Miss Sarat, (Patli)

Nicole and with Stephen Carl Porter conducted a recording session in India during 1904-05. Most Indian repertoire records released by Nicole were the result of recordings conducted during this session. In 1905, a new company Nicole Freres (India) Ltd. was established to promote the sales of Nicole products.

Nicole records never became very popular in the Indian market because they were made of cardboard which made them fragile under Indian climatic conditions. The company did introduce shellac made Nicole discs later but even this did not help. Nicole could not survive the intense competition from other record companies.

Though short lived, Nicole's contribution to the cause of Indian music was not insignificant, it gave us some of the rare recordings of great stalwarts of Hindustani music like Ustad Ramzan Khan, Ustad Gauri Shankar Misra, Ustad Mojjuddin Khan, Ustad Mooney Khan, Peara Saheb and Miss Gauharjan of Calcutta. It also gave India her first disc record of "Vande Mataram" in the voice of Shri Narain Chandra Mukherjee. Amrit Lal Basu (Calcutta Theatre); Miss Fool Kumari, Miss Jadoomoni Baiji; L.C. Baral; P.C. Bose; Miss Kheroda; Miss Nalanee; Hiranyamoyee Baijee; Miss Susheelabala Dassi; Miss Hena and Sarat (Patli); Miss Putlee; Miss Bivabati; Miss Kiron; Miss Rani; Miss Binodini; Talim Hussain of Lucknow; J.D. Sakhia of Bombay; Tara Sundari Dassi (Bengal Theatre); Nikunja Behari Dutt; Aghor Nath Sarkar and Ashutosh Addy were some other prominent artists recorded by Nicole.

Miss Rani Sundari Dassi: Beka Grand Record

Abdul Macci:Beka Grand Record

# BEKA GRAND RECORDS

The company Beka Record G.m.b.H., Berlin was formed in 1905. The name 'Beka' was derived from the initials from the surnames of the founders of the company- Heinrich Bumb and Max Koenig ('B' taken from Bumb and 'K' from Koenig).

Heinrich Bumb and Wilhelm Haderd made the first Indian recordings for Beka in November 1905, at Bombay, with the help of their local agent-Valabhadas Runchordas. As a result of this recording session the company released three hundred thirty single- sided 8" size 'Beka Records' and 10" size Beka-Grand Records. By 1906, Beka's local agent Valabhadas Runchordas had established a separate company 'The Talking Machine and Indian Record Co.' with offices at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, to market 'Beka' label records in India. Between 1906 and 1911, M/s Beka-Grand G.m.b.H., Berlin conducted a number of recording sessions in India and as a consequence it had almost three thousand titles of Indian repertoires on its catalogue. It was the biggest competitor of The Gramophone Company Ltd. However, after Beka record G.m.b.H. merged with Fritz Puppel G.m.b.H. (Berlin) the manufacturers of 'ODEON RECORDS', the interest of 'Beka Record Company' in India diminished (Odeon's Indian repertoire records first appeared in March, 1908. They were based on recordings made by experts of the International Talking Machine Co., G.m.b.H. during 1906 -07).

Some of the earlier Beka records were issued as single-sided discs with white or navy coloured labels. Later, double-sided discs were also issued.

In a singular departure, at the peak of the anti-partition movement of Bengal, Beka changed its brand name and the colour of its label to release the recordings of the great national leader Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee. This record had a yellow label (one of the colours used in the 'Calcutta Flag' which was accepted as 'Flag of India' during the anti-partition and Swadeshi

movement days), the company even changed the brand name of their record and used the world 'National' in place of 'BEKA'. Thus this double-sided record ( record numbers 20290 and 20291) was issued with the label "NATIONAL-GRAND-RECORD" and not Beka-Grand Record. It was an extraordinary gesture on the part of this German Company to extend support to the freedom movement of India.

'Beka Records' suffered heavily during the 1st World War when as a part of the British Empire, India banned all trade with Germany. Under these unusual circumstances its main agent in India M/s Valabhdas Ranchordas started another company The Viel-O-Phone Company Ltd. primarily with an aim to promote Viel-O-Phone disc records. Some of the popular artists recorded under Beka Grand Records were: Miss Mulkajan, Miss Hingan Bai of Calcutta; Malkajan of Chappra; Khursheed Ali Khan, Mohammadijan, Wazirjan of Lucknow; Balgandharva; Sohrabjee Dhondi; Abdul Macci (Kuran recitations); Vailatu and Sadak Ali, Master Mohan; Gopal Chandra Singh Roy; Kherati; Miss Purna Kumari Dassi; Miss Charubala; Mr. Hormusjee, Mr. Kawasji (Parsee Theatre); Miss Nasseban Jan, Miss Radha; Mr. Murad Ali; Miss Hira; Dada Bhai Mistry; Emmamuddin; Ferozshah K. Dajee and Sorab.

Bal Gandharva

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1- Miss Fitna
2- Miss Kasi
3- Miss Chanda Bai
Karwarkarin
4- Md. Ashruf

# RAM-A-PHONE AND RAMA GRAPH RECORDS

A collaborative enterprise of The Lyrophone Werke G.m.b.H., Hanover, Germany and M/s T.S. Ramachunder and Bros., 26 Kalbadevi Raod, Kalbadevi, Bombay, "Ram-a-Phone Disc Record" first appeared in the Indian market in 1907. These releases were the result of the Bombay recording session conducted in early 1907. The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. enforced an injunction on the company that the word 'Ram-a-phone' sounds similar to 'Gramophone' hence this word need not be used as a brand name. Thereafter the company adopted the title 'Rama-Graph Disc Record' for its future releases (but since it had some records which showed the Ram-a-phone label, paper strips with the legend 'RAMAGRAPH' were pasted on these records and were released in the market). Subsequently, the company adapted the label 'RAMAGRAPH' in 1927 and remained in business till 1939.

Major artists recorded under this label were: Peara Saheb of Metiaburj, Calcutta; Mohammed Hussain, Harmonium Master of Nagina; Miss Chanda Bai Karwarkarin alias Bablee Bai of Goa and Miss Acchan. Other artists were Miss Kasi; Mr. Mohammed; Mr. Mohan; Master Trikum; Miss Rahmoojan of Parsee Theatre; Miss Mankoo and Chubbil; Miss Fitna; Md. Ashruf; Mr. Bhagoo; Sohrabjee Katrak; Mr. B. Rao; Mr. Ramachander; Mr. Murad Ali; Master Purusottam and Mr. Vittal.

# JAMES-OPERAPHONE-RECORDS

In 1907, The James Manufacturing Company, 103 Kalbadevi Road, Bombay, a company of Parsee entrepreneurs, introduced 'James Operaphone Records' in the Indian market. Their high-priced records were issued under the label 'James-Operaphone-Record'. Mohammed Hussain of Nagina and Miss Gohar (Parsee Theatre) were two prominent artists covered by these labels. A few records found under these labels bear no description of the song or the artist, whereas some records show only the title of the song or the name of the singer. By 1910 The James Manufacturing Company had stopped marketing its recordings.

Miss Gohar
(Parsee Theatre)

# SINGER RECORDS

'Singer Records' were introduced by 'The Singer Phone & Record Agency' 10-12, Kalbadevi Rod, Bombay in 1908. Some of the double-sided singer discs interestingly contained an Indian number like Lawani, Dadra or Gujrati song on one side and a European number i.e. either an English song or a Band, on the other. For example record number 1617 and 1-63033H of 'SINGER LABEL', has a recording of the Band 'H.M. King's Colonials London' on one side (number-1-63033 H) and on the reverse (number-1617) is " Seth Sethaniyo Ne Jhagdo", a duet in Gujrati by Bhagat and Rambha. In another case, the double sided 'SINGER' record on one side (record number 1036) presents Lawani (Marathi), whereas on the reverse side (record number-1-63022 H) is the "Earl of Lonsdale's Private Military Band" (this coupling of Indian and English languages has also been seen in the 'Beka Grand' Label). In the case of Beka Grand record, the record side with number 40942 presents a comic song by Mr. Billy Whitlock whereas the other side of the record presents a 'Dadra' song with the words "Sone Ke Thalee Mein Jeyona Parosha", a song popular in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Singer record releases lasted till 1930. Both Singer and James-Opera records represented a large number of artists who were from western India and mainly performed for Parsi Theatres. One of the important releases under these labels is that of Miss Gauhar Jan of Calcutta.

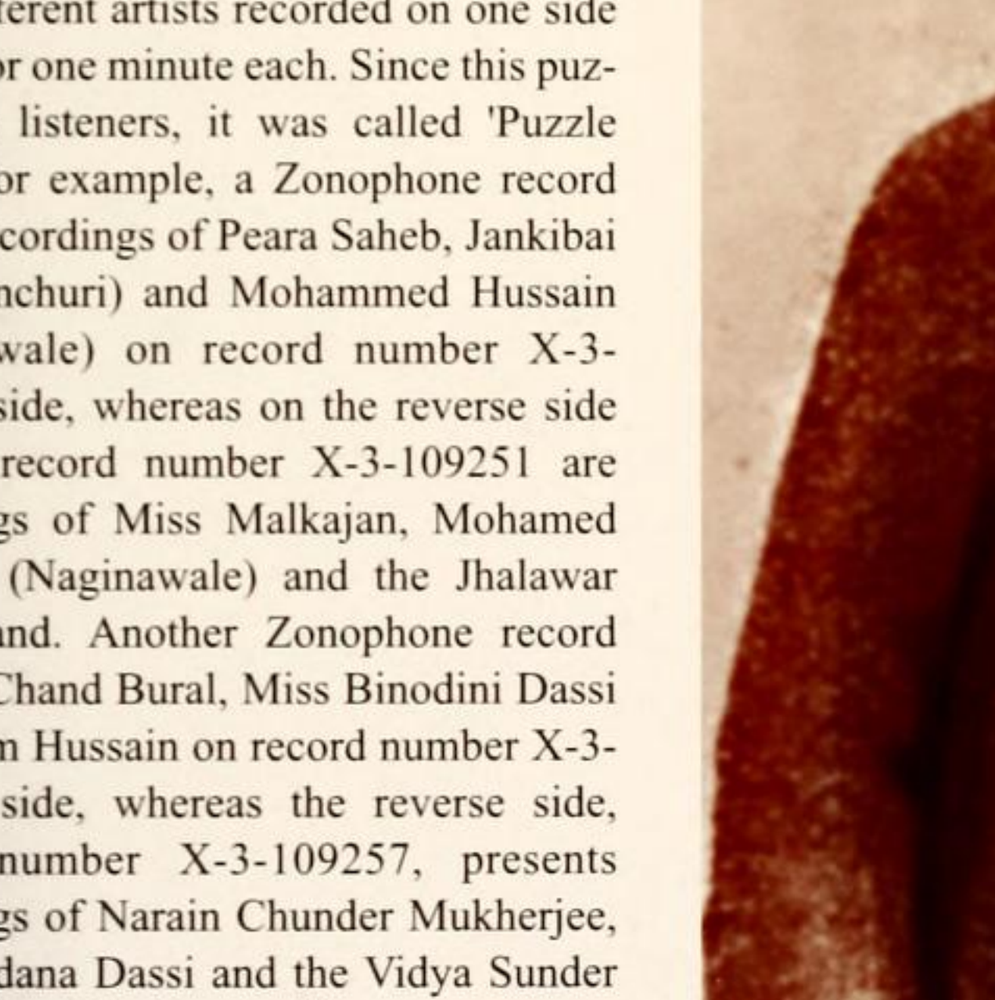
Bhagat and Rambha

H.M. King's Colonials London

## ZONOPHONE PUZZLE PLATES

# UNUSUAL RECORDS
# THE ZONOPHONE PUZZLE PLATES

Around 1910, The Gramophone Company Ltd., introduced Puzzle plates. These 78 R.P.M. records were double-sided records that contained recordings of three artists each on each side. Each side used to be played thrice and every time the needle ran from the periphery to the centre playing only one of the three songs. Generally one side of a 10", 78 R.P.M. record played for three minutes, therefore three songs of three different artists recorded on one side played for one minute each. Since this puzzled the listeners, it was called 'Puzzle Plate'. For example, a Zonophone record shows recordings of Peara Saheb, Jankibai (Chappanchuri) and Mohammed Hussain (Naginawale) on record number X-3-109250 side, whereas on the reverse side bearing record number X-3-109251 are recordings of Miss Malkajan, Mohamed Hussain (Naginawale) and the Jhalawar State Band. Another Zonophone record has Lal Chand Bural, Miss Binodini Dassi and Talim Hussain on record number X-3-109256 side, whereas the reverse side, record number X-3-109257, presents recordings of Narain Chunder Mukherjee, Miss Bedana Dassi and the Vidya Sunder tune rendered by the Pataldanga Orchestra.




L.C. Bural

# SUN DISC RECORDS

'Sun Disc Records' was the label of the Sun Record Company established by F.B. Thanewalla in 1909. It was priced at rupees two per record (double sided) which was the lowest price for a disc record in those days. Earlier these records were pressed at Berlin, Germany, but around World War I, due to the ban on trade with Germany by 1912, The Disc Record Co. Ltd., England, started pressing records for this Company. Its German pressings had black labels with gold lettering, whereas the English pressings had plum labels with gold lettering.

Sun Disc Records ultimately downed shutters in 1913. This label is best remembered for the records of the legendary Miss Gauharjan of Calcutta.

Miss Gauharjan of Calcutta
under Sun Disc Lable

# MISPRINTS AND SUPER IMPOSITIONS

Vithal More

Roma Bai

In the process of investigating old records, some interesting instances of misprinting of record labels have come to my notice. For example record number A-245063 b (Odeon label) of Vithal More shows information in English in a proper direction whereas the information in Hindi has been printed in the reverse order. This record was made in Germany and the mistake appears to be a casual one. In another case, a superimposition of a printed text has been observed. In case of Gramophone Concert Record number G.C. 8-13484 sung by Mumtazjan, a label impression of The Gramophone Concert Record G.C.-4-13111 of KIRTON sung by Roma Bai is printed in a reverse order. (A photograph of original G.C.-4-13111 may also be seen for comparison). Again this appears to be a manufacturing defect or caused due to storage of freshly printed records over one another.

Mumtaz Jan

**H. Bose was one of the first Indians to launch his own brand of records ("H. Bose's Records") and helped disseminate patriotic songs specially Vande Mataram among a wider audience. Non-Indian recording companies also contributed their bit to the cause of the anti-Partition Movement and released some records of Vande Mataram.**

The sound recording machine proved to be a boon in the field of Indian music, theatre and audio media. The real impact of this invention was felt only in 1903 when the first batch of vernacular-content discs was released in the Indian market for sale. These releases contained recordings made by the team of Fredric William Gaisberg during his first tour in 1902 which was focused on Calcutta artists. Perhaps The Gramophone Company was unaware of the huge marketing potential of the Indian entertainment world or was being prudent by starting the experiment with a single city. As the sale of Gramophones, Phonographs and records picked-up, the recording companies cast their nets wider to cover more languages and regions of India. Undoubtedly the companies were guided by profit still their wares helped in the creation of a vibrant national cultural identity and provided performers with opportunities for the exchange of ideas and synthesis of newer forms. Music and drama of a particular geographical region received recognition in other regions of the country- patriotic songs like 'Vande Mataram' and political speeches delivered by Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee or dialogues from plays like 'Chhatrapati Shivaji', 'Siraj-ud-daula', 'Mir Kasim' etc. received national acceptance and recognition and strengthened an inter-region cultural cross fertilization in India.

A theme-wise analysis of these recordings shows that they fall into two main categories- entertainment related recordings (classical and semi classical renderings,songs and dialogues related to theatre, Band performances etc.) and recordings with political messages (speeches, slogans and recitations of songs); with the first category overshadowing the second. A detailed study of recordings reveals that of the approximately 8500 recordings available in the "live catalogue" of various recording companies which operated in India up to 1910, less than 1% were devoted to political themes.

In fact, the commercial sound recording industry started in India at a time when the country needed it to act as a vehicle of political education and propaganda amongst the masses. The Indian press was already active as the main instrument of politicization, political propaganda and propagation of nationalist ideology; and forming and consolidating nationalist public opinion. For the leaders of the sound recording industry too this was a golden opportunity to establish it at par with the press.

Pioneers like Hemendra Mohan Bose (also known as H. Bose) of H. Bose's Records, Mukherjee and Mukherjee of Royal Records, Bina Pani Recording Company and Kamala Recording Company etc. established recording enterprises during this period and did their best to support the cause of Indian nationalism, Swadeshism and the Anti Partition Movement of 1905.

In 1905, Path Freres, Paris, opened an office at Bentinck Street, Calcutta, and appointed H. Bose as its agent to market Pathe cylinders and phonograph machines in India. He opened "Talking Machine Hall", at Marble House, Dharmatala Street, Calcutta. By then H. Bose had earned a reputation as an expert sound recordist. He was also awarded the gold medal for his phonographic cylinders at the Indian Industrial and Agricultural exhibition held at Calcutta in 1906-1907.

In March 1906, H. Bose advertised in the newspaper "The Bengali" the availability of Pathe cylinders and new phonograph models and recordings of the song Vande Mataram: "It has created a sensation! H. BOSES RECORD on our new model Phonographs have created a sensation Indeed! If you have not heard these records you don't know what a talking machine can do. H. BOSES RECORDS will prove to you that it has become possible for a Talking Machine to take the place of a Singer. No hissing, no screeching, no nasal or metallic twang, which are the inseparable companion of the Foreign Records you have so long heard, but it is

THE PURE SONG AND NOTHING BUT THE SONG. For the first time in Calcutta highly respectable gentlemen like Babu Rabindra Nath Tagore, Babu Dwinjendra Lal Roy. have very kindly allowed us to record their voices and this is a privilege which has not been conferred upon any one else, The following songs are few examples of our large and varied stock. VANDE MATARAM. sung by the well known Vande Mataram Sampradaya of Calcutta..."

H. Bose was one of the first Indians to launch his own brand of records ("H. Bose's Records") and helped disseminate patriotic songs specially Vande Mataram among a wider audience. Non-Indian recording companies also contributed their bit to the cause of the anti-Partition Movement and released some records of Vande Mataram. The first Vande Mataram disc record in the voice of Narayon Chandra Mukherjee was recorded in 1905 by Stephen Carl Porter for the Nicole Recording Company Ltd., this 10 inch single-side recorded disc was released in March 1906. Its other versions were also released in the market by February 1907. Prior to this, the cylindrical records of Vande Mataram in the voice of Rabindra Nath Tagore recorded by H. Bose were most probably already in circulation in the Indian market prior to their advertisement in 1906. When they were advertised, they were offered for sale at the cost of Rupees 2 and 8 annas each and were advertised to be played on the new model phonograph of the Pathe Freres Company, the family model of which cost Rs.70/- each whereas the Grand triple phonograph model was priced at Rs. 175. Some of H. Bose's cylinder records and Pathe/H. Bose's records of Vande Mataram are- H. Bose's Cylinder Record (record number 250 of the year 1906, by Rabindra Nath Tagore - Concert size); H. Bose's Cylinder Record (record numbers 250 of the year 1906, by Sevak Sampradaya (Standard size); Pathe/H. Bose's double sided vertical cut record (record number 3511 of the year 1908, by Rabindra Nath Tagore ); Pathe / H. Bose's double sided vertical cut record (record number 3512 of the year 1908, by Sevak Sampradaya); H. Bose's Record /pathe (record number 36-250 of the year 1908, by Rabindra Nath Tagore (standard size); H. Bose's Record/Pathe (record number 36-350 of the year 1908, by Rabindra Nath Tagore (concert size).

Not to be left behind, The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. released a rendering of Vande Mataram in the voice of R.N. Bose on a 12-inch size record under Gramophone Monarch Records label (catalogue number 012112) in 1906 and two other records of 10-inch size under the label Gramophone Concert Records in 1908 in the voice of Narayon Chandra Mukherjee.

The growing support for the Swadeshi Movement by the recording industry did not last because the British Government used the draconian Dramatic Performances Control Act-1876 to crush the movement. H. Bose's establishments were raided during 1905 and 1906 and these valuable pieces of great historical and cultural importance were destroyed by the authorities. This was a great blow to the initiatives of indigenous entrepreneurs. Foreign entrepreneurs were not spared either, by 1908 performance or recording of Vande Mataram as well as some other patriotic songs and plays were proscribed. The Gramophone Company Ltd. and other companies were forced to withdraw their releases of Vande Mataram and similar patriotic numbers from the market.

As a consequence, after 1908, not much effort appears to have been made to record and release political messages of various great leaders of this country for quite a while. The industry also failed to emerge as an effective audio media at par with the press or print media.

Interestingly, nearly one-third of the founding fathers of the Congress in 1885 were journalists. Powerful newspapers emerged during these years under distinguished, fearless journalists who also hap-

Rabindra Nath Tagore

**Thus it was that despite the initial zeal to participate in the Freedom Movement, the sound recording and reproducing industry could not move further and compete with the press and thus failed in its role of social mobilizer. However, its contribution to the cause of Indian music, theatre and the Indian National Freedom Movement cannot be overlooked.**

pened to be great social mobilizers. These were: the Hindu and Swadesamitran under the editorship of G. Subramaniyaiyer, Kesari and Mahratta under B.G. Tilak, The Bengalee under Surendranath Banerjee, Amrita Bazar Patrika under Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh, Sudharak under G.K. Gokhle, Indian Mirror under N.N. Sen, Voice of India under Dadabhai Naoroji, Hindustani and Advocate under G.P. Verma. In fact, there hardly existed a major political leader in India who did not own newspaper or was not associated with one in some capacity or the other. The press positioned itself as effective opposition to the Government. Almost every act and policy of the Government was subjected to sharp criticism, in many cases with great care and vast learning backing it up. In addition, newspapers were not in those days business enterprises, they were published as a national or public service. They were often financed as objects of philanthropy. To be a journalist was often to be a political worker and an agitator at considerable self-sacrifice.[9] However, the field of sound recording industry was devoid of any such accredited patronage or acknowledged political leadership or association of repute. Its Indian entrepreneurs were a motley crowd of idealistic technologists, hardnosed businessmen and in some cases, plain opportunists. Powerful and moneyed entrepreneurs had entered the Indian market driven by the lure of fat profits, they had no desire to take on the British Government for an Indian cause. BEKA'S initiative to support the national cause was marred due to the First World War, which put Germany and British-ruled India into two rival camps.

The newspapers in those days reached even a remote village, a library movement covered every corner of the country. Newspapers were subscribed for the chaupals of villages and a few copies served the requirement of the whole village. Even the cost of printing equipment was not much. Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee paid only Rs. 1600/- in 1879 to acquire the printing press on which he published "The Bengali". The cost of establishing a record production facility was much more. Its enormity can be assessed from the fact that between July 1905 to June 1910 the sales figures of records, machines and other sundries of The Gramophone Company Ltd. in India (Bombay and Calcutta branches) itself reached to the extent of Rs.45 lakhs approximately.

The cost of newspapers was just a few paise whereas records were priced in rupees. Between in 1901 and 1911, the average life expectancy at birth of a common Indian was 22.59 years (male) and 23.31 years (female) and the price of coarse rice in Bengal was Rs.3.65 per mound (About 36 Kilograms) in 1900. In 1901, one gramophone record cost approximately Rs.2/- each and an Edison phonograph cost between Rs.20/- to Rs.40/-; by 1910 the costs had risen to Rs.3 per record and Rs.80/- to Rs.150/- per gramophone/phonograph. In other words, the cost of print media products like newspapers, pamphlets, special issues, posters, banners etc. was far cheaper than the cost of records and gramophones. Newspapers also provided more content than a three minute one sided 78 R.P.M. gramophone record or a cylindrical record of almost similar capacity. In view of the easy accessibility of newspapers with more news to read and share, a costly gramophone record could not emerge as its substitute nor could a Gramophone machine achieve the status of a community machine. It remained a wonder machine limited to the upper middle and rich classes of India.

The Dramatic Performance Control Act 1876 which proscribed public performances of patriotic plays, songs and playing of their records, the press was also subjected to equally strict scrutiny, censor and sentence under the provisions of Indian Penal Code (Section 124A, Section 153A). As per Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code, anyone who attempted to excite feelings of disaffection for the Government established by law in British India was punishable with transportation

for life or for any term or with imprisonment up to three years. Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code which was introduced in 1898 provided teeth to authorities and perpetuation of hatred against Englishmen was declared a criminal offence. Even then "Indian journalists adopted several clever strategies and evolved a distinct style of writing to remain outside the reach of the law. Since Section 124A excluded writings of persons whose loyalty to the Government was undoubted, they invariably prefaced their vitriolic writings with effusive sentiments of loyalty to the Government and the Queen. Another stratagem was to publish anti-imperialist extracts from London-based socialist and Irish newspapers or letters from radical British citizens knowing that the Indian Government could not discriminate against Indians by taking action against them without touching the offending Britishers. Sometimes the extract from the British newspaper would be taken without quotation marks and acknowledgement of the source, thus teasing the British-Indian bureaucracy into contemplating or taking action which would have to be given up once the real source of the comment became known".[10] However, this kind of stratagem could not be adopted through recorded voices. A patriotic song like Vande Mataram which acquired iconic status and aroused patriotic sentiments, had to be presented in its original form. Any deviation or alteration from its text could have been resented by the public and would had been counter productive to the business interests of the recording companies. It must also be remembered that in the past a series of satirical plays like "Gadadhar and Yuvraj" and "Hanuman Charitra" etc. staged by Calcutta Theatres had provided the opportunity for the enactment of 'The Dramatic Performance Control Act 1876AD'.

Thus it was that despite the initial zeal to participate in the Freedom Movement, the sound recording and reproducing industry could not move further and compete with the press and thus failed in its role of social mobilizer. However, its contribution to the cause of Indian music, theatre and the Indian National Freedom Movement cannot be overlooked. These efforts have left behind a documented history of what happened in those days, Indian history has never been so richly documented as it has been during the last hundred years, when it acquired the treasure of numerous living documents in the form of recorded voice.

Preserved systematically, these documents open new horizons of research in the field of Ethnomusicology, Comparative Musicology, Cultural Economics, Social Anthropology, Evolutionary Musicology and are confirmatory tools for the study of oral traditions, cultural studies of greater and lesser traditions, women's studies, Aesthetics etc.

Such records can help as 'silent partner' or as a 'third presence' in furthering ethnomusicology studies by allowing us to access our past otherwise lost. Apart from helping the study of cross-cultural synthesis in musical compositions and their performances, they contain surprises, some yet to be unearthed. It is exciting for connoisseurs of the music of the Jaipur Gharana or Jaipur- Atrauli Gharana or the Kawwal Bachhe Gharana of Lucknow to know that old records of Ustad Puttan Khan of Atrauli and Ustad Khurseed Ali Khan of Lucknow are available for posterity. Even the music of the great Vina player revered Venkatagiriappa, guru of Mysore Doraiswamy, is available through recordings of Bake cylinders. These recordings and many like them could be great sources for comparative musicology. We can conduct comparative musicological studies in respect of Ragas rendered by various Gharanas on inter- and intra- comparative lines.

By comparing the oldest canned music with the present, the elements of "then and now phenomena" or emic and etic interpretations could also be easily studied. The book "Vaarwadhu Vivechan" mentions that before Hyderijan Chunewali of Lucknow,

Ustad Khurseed Ali Khan of Lucknow

**Credit must also be given to those daughters of our land many of whom were subjected to unfavourable social conditions and underwent physical exploitation (sometimes as guinea pigs in British Lock Hospitals) and continued to preserve our cultural heritage at the cost of personal humiliation and sufferngs.**

thumri showed a greater inclination towards the classical side, it acquired a simpler tone under a new style introduced by Badi Malka (mother of the famous Miss Gauhar Jan of Calcutta). With Badi Malka's records available, a line of research can trace the trajectory of change evidenced in thumri rendering in a span of a hundred years. Such studies will also help identify the turning points leading to the evolution of new simplified genres of music from more complicated ones. The in-between connecting links and those which have not swayed with time in their presentation could also be identified as musical living fossils and thus the science of evolutionary music can be documented in an Indian context.

An archival resource of recorded music also opens possibilities of cantometric studies on the model of Alan Lomax, where one can link musical styles of rendering with cultural settings and can generate databases and develop rating systems to create song profiles under various parameters. A casual scrutiny of the recordings of the last hundred years, no less than 400 such records of renderings of thumri of different styles are available which could be the basis of such cantometric studies.

The Indian sub-continent has been fabulously rich in poetic and lyrical outpourings. "Rag-Kalpadrum" made a serious effort to collect and publish many such compositions which would otherwise have been lost. A hundred years of Indian recordings have provided us with the opportunity to preserve our poetic and lyrical content for posterity.

Further, recordings, both those of field as well as art music, in the context of our subcontinent, offer immense potential to trace elements of greater and lesser cultural traditions of our land. Though the taxonomy of such traditions from the days of Matang's "Braha-desi" (marga-sangeet denoting major canonical classical traditions and desi-sangeet encompassing all regional, localised rural little traditions), its further reiteration in Sarangdeva's "Sangita Ratnakar" and present day elaborations by the likes of Capwell, Ranade, Wade and Bhattacharya are not the subject matter of discussion here, recorded discs will definitely contribute to and identify such elements preserved through them. According to Ashis Nandy, the process of colonialism "alters cultural priorities on both sides and brings to the centre of the colonial culture, sub-cultures previously recessive or sub-ordinate in the two confronting cultures." In the Indian context such elements of sub-cultural traditions are preserved through early recordings (e.g. "Manick Peer's Song (G.C.-4-12521)" in the voice of the great Bengal theatre man Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi (Manick Peer being a local god is worshiped for protecting cattle by village folk). Many such recorded voices also remind us of the existence of elements of the silent culture as advocated by Frantz Fanon.

Musical renderings preserved through records are also a great source for the study of Aesthetics. Though in some cases they may generate the extreme Luddite desire to smash recorded music on the ground that it substitutes humans with machines, many consider recorded discs incomparable with the actual renderings and some may even wholeheartedly agree with Walter Benjamin that mechanical reproduction works to diminish the aura of music in time and space; yet the contribution of recorded music in creating rasa and leading the listener to enjoy music through the processes of rasaswadan and rasanubhuti in day to day life cannot be denied. Records act like a bridge between two physically unconnected entities, defying the barriers of time and space.

Records are also a great resource for women's studies. Today we have access to hundreds of records of obscure women performers. It is surprising that in 1902, when first commercial recordings started, it were the dancing girls who got recorded first. This distinction could easily have

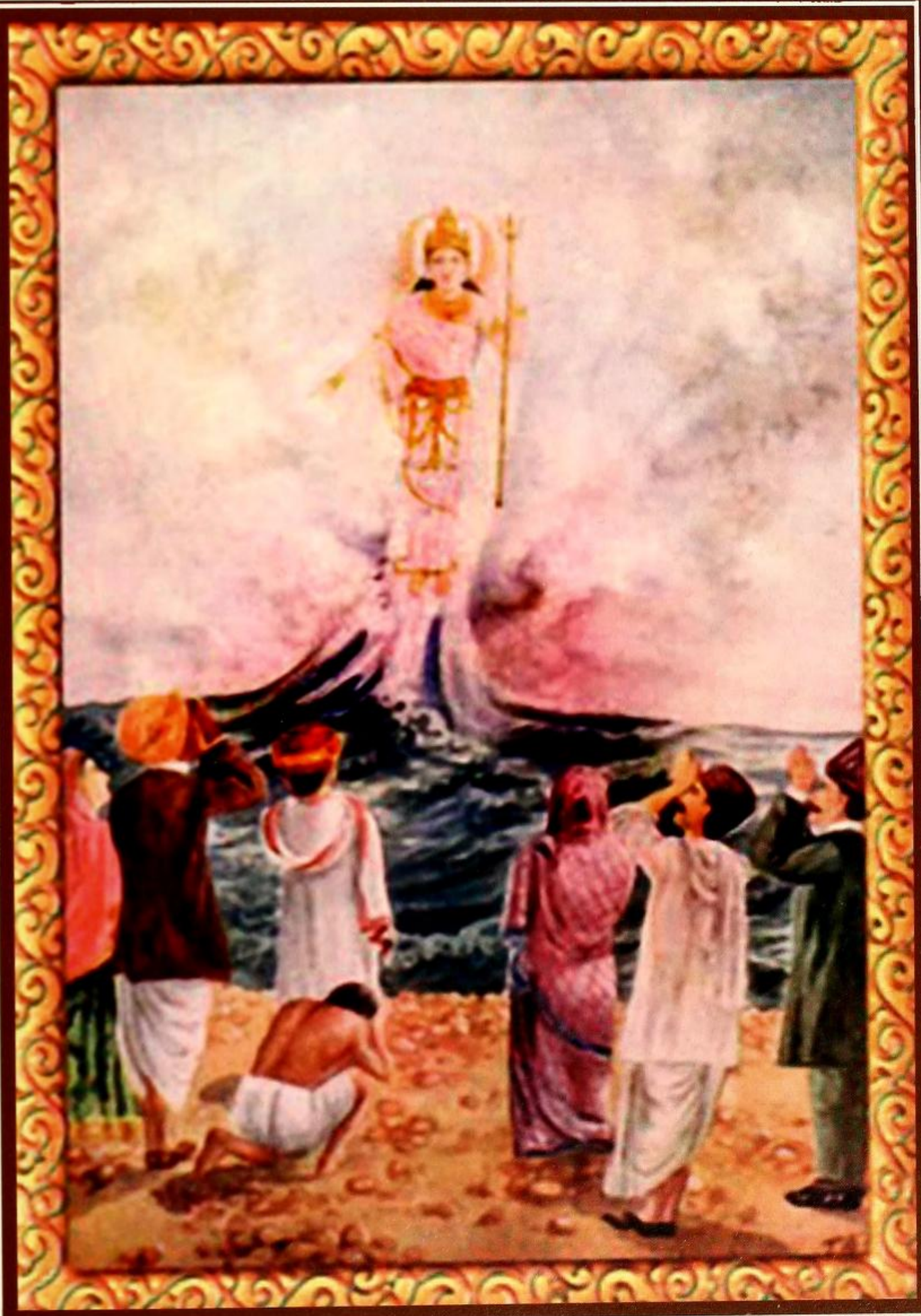
gone to many reputed male singers or reputed personalities from the political or other walks of life. Still the records from the first recording session conducted by Gaisberg show that out of 550 records released in 7" and 10" sizes, almost 50% of them were in the voices of women performers. And it was the legendary Gauhar Jan and not a male artist who recorded in thirteen languages in this session.

Credit must also be given to those unsung daughters of India many of whom were subjected to unfavourable social conditions and underwent physical exploitation and continued to preserve our cultural heritage at the cost of personal humiliation and sufferings. Their socio-cultural history is still embedded in these records through their voices. A proper representation of them today will definitely be a fitting tribute to their contribution to the cause of Indian music.

However, all this requires for us to wake up to the potential of the early records and archive them systematically. Time has come when someone from amongst us has to give a newspaper advertisement like the one given by E.LAFONT S.J. in 'The Statesman' dated 13th July 1886 to recreate our interest in the recorded voice from our past.

Vidyadhari Bai

The painting depicting Vande Matram
Artist: Shri Tejendra Kumar Mitra, 1923
Courtesy: Shri E. Venkatraaman Sundaram



EDISON "HOME" PHONOGRAPH, MODEL
"A," VERY EARLY VERSION, 1897

# 2 THE FIRST GREATEST INDIAN GRAMOPHONE RECORD

It is said that "some records are to be heard, others to be enjoyed, and some few to be treasured". The National-Grand-Record (number 20291) coupled with record number 20290 certainly belongs to the 'to be treasured' category. This gramophone record is of great historical importance for India, Pakistan and Bangladesh as it contains Surendra Nath Banerjee's speech on the 'Partition of Bengal' on its 20291 side, and his speech on 'Vande Matram' and 'Swadeshy' on record number 20290 side. Known as the 'Father of Indian Nationalism', Surendra Nath Banerjee was a visionary national leader.

Surendra Nath Banerjee

As a young man Surendra Nath Banerjee had to face blatant discrimination at the hands of the British Government which deprived him from continuing as an ICS Officer and also from becoming a Barrister subsequently. Undeterred, Surendra Babu found a career in teaching and through the forum of the 'Students Association', advocated active participation of students in national politics. In collaboration with Ananda Mohan Bose, he led the younger nationalists of Bengal and found the 'Indian Association' in July 1876, with the objective to unite Indian people and provide them with a common political platform to enable them to formulate their views and communicate their opinions to authorities concerned. The Indian Association, Calcutta was the most important nationalist organization in the pre-Congress days. After the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, Surendra Babu became its president twice- in 1895 at Poona and in 1902 at Ahmedabad.

In 1879, Surendra Nath Banerjee became the owner-editor of the weekly magazine 'The Bengalee', which subsequently became a daily newspaper. He used his paper effectively to support public causes and disseminate anti-partition messages among the masses. Though he became a member of the Bengal Legislative Council (1883), The Imperial Council of India (1913) and the British Government made him a peer and also a Minister (1921), nationalism remained his prime concern. He strongly opposed Lord Curzon's move to partition Bengal and led this agitation from the front. Surendra Babu was a moderate leader. "India", he hoped, "would in

Record:
Speech on Partition of Bengal by Babu Surendra Nath Banerjii

fullness of time find its place in the great confederacy of free states". Reacting to Lord Curzon's declaration that by Indian environment, Indian heritage and Indian upbringing, Indians are unequal to the responsibilities of high office under British Rule, Surendra Nath said: "Never was a deeper affront offered to the people of India by a representative of the sovereign. It is bad enough to repudiate the Proclamation but it is adding insult to injury to cast a slur on the people of this country."[1]

The Partition of Bengal was the brainchild of Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India from 1898 to 1905. For Curzon " the viceroyalty of India, was a dream come true. He was a brilliant intellectual-scholar, writer and speaker. He had ideas, initiative and drive

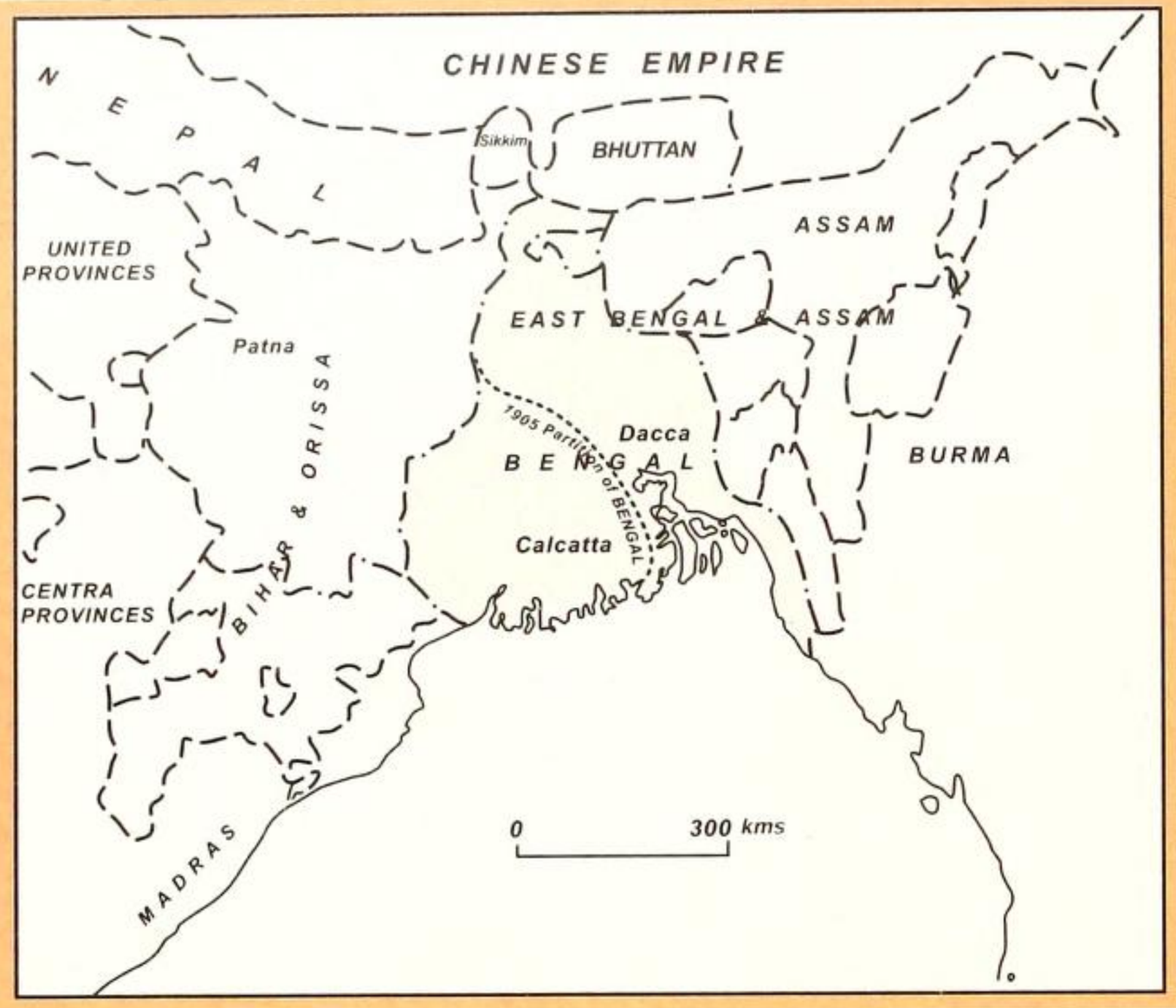
and organizational ability of a high order. In translating his ideas into action he spared neither himself nor others. Efficiency was his watchword. But he suffered from some serious defects of character. He was inordinately ambitious, overweeningly vain, obstinate and heedless of advice, contemptuous of opposition, self-righteous, unscrupulous, excitable and moody. He lacked imagination and sympathy, showed little understanding of men and rode roughshod over the feelings of even his own subordinates."[2] Curzon reflected his deep hatred in his anti-India and anti-Indian views. He said "Indians are not one community, one language, one race or one religion; they are a continent, an empire, almost a universe apart,"[3] and that "it will be well for England, better for India, and best for all for the cause of progressive civilization in general, if it be clearly understood from the outset..... we have not the smallest intention of abandoning our Indian possessions and that it is highly improbable that any such intention will be entertained by our posterity."[4] He further opined, "Indians are the voiceless millions who can neither read nor write their own tongues. The people of India are the ryots and the peasants, whose life is not one of political aspiration but of mute penury and toil. The plans and policies of the Congress party in India would leave the amorphous residuum absolutely untouched."[5] As Viceroy of India, he became highly unpopular due to his anti-people measures. He had special reasons to be dissatisfied with the strong resistance Bengal offered against many of his reactionary measures. Aggrieved with the vehement opposition he had to face in Bengal, he once lamented that "God may forgive the Bengalees but I never will".

‹

Lord Curzon
Viceroy of India

Curzon master-minded the strategy to partition Bengal to achieve certain objectives: to dilute the powerful administrative base of the Bengalees and choke their determined voice in the Council of the State; to check the spread of Bengalee language over the united territory; to divide the great body of Bengalee intelligentsia and to curb the influence of newspapers; to shear much of the power of the Calcutta High Court and close shearing of Calcutta which had turned into the main centre of Bengalee culture and agitation.

In fact, Bengal had been the seat of British power in India right since the middle of the eighteenth century. From Bengal the British influence and dominion extended to other parts of Eastern India. As more territories were brought under British administration, they were incorporated in Bengal. After the 'Battle of Buxar' in 1764, The East India Company obtained from the Moghul Emperor Shah Alam, the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. At that time British Orissa included only the Bengal district of Midnapore-the other parts of Orissa were ceded by the Bhonsale of Nagpur after the second Mahratta War in 1803 and annexed to the province of Bengal. More territories (mainly in modern U.P. and Central India) known as the Ceded and Conquered Provinces were added to Bengal as the conquests went on. These Conquered and Ceded Provinces




The Partition of Bengal-1905 (Source-Amrit Bazar Patrika-1944)

were separated from Bengal in 1836 under the name of the North-Western provinces. In 1874 came another partition, Assam was separated and made a Province by itself. Assam gained and Bengal lost by this transfer (a) the Sylhet or Surma Valley, (b) the Goalpara district of the Brahmaputra Valley. Both formed part of the grant of the Dewani of Bengal obtained by the East India Company in 1764. The Hill Station of Darjeeling was ceded in 1835 by the Raja of Sikkim and in 1850 the entire district was annexed to Bengal. However, the first real partition of Bengal came in 1905 when the Government found it too hard a task to govern a province with a population of 80 millions and an equally vast territory Eastern Bengal (including Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions, the State of Hill of Tipperah and the North Bengal district of Malda) was transferred to the Province of Assam and the new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam was constituted, splitting up the Bengali-speaking people into two, resented by them strongly and rousing them to an opposition without precedent in recent history. Five Oriya-speaking States in the Central Provinces were added to the Orissa division of Bengal proper and in lieu of 5 Hindi-speaking States from Chota Nagpur were transferred to the Central Provinces.[6] The population of Bengal thus was reduced to 54 million from 80 million under this redistribution of boundaries.

Announced on 1st September 1905, the partition of Bengal was to be made effective from 16th October, 1905. It was greeted with vigorous protests all around and Lord Curzon was in the eye of this storm. It was unacceptable to the people of India. 16th October, 1905 was observed as the "day of mourning" with large scale protests and fasts observed everywhere. Millions bathed in the holy Ganga and chanted patriotic songs. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's 'Vande Mataram' became the war cry of the day. This day was also observed as 'Raksha Bandhan' to remind people of the brotherhood between the people of East and West Bengal. In the afternoon Anand Mohan Bose laid down the foundation stone of the "Foundation-Hall" in Calcutta which symbolized the Unity of all Bengalees. With almost all prominent leaders of Bengal in attendance, the event attracted a large gathering.

In keeping with convention the national proclamation was read with great ceremony and the audience avowed to adopt the

principle of Swadeshi. The proclamation was: "Whereas the Government has thought fit to effectuate the partition of Bengal in spite of the universal protest of the Bengali nation, we hereby pledge and proclaim that we as a people shall do everything in our power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of our Province and to maintain the integrity of our race. So help us God. (Dated this First day of November in the year Nineteen Hundred and Five and given under the Seal of United Bengal)". Later, this mammoth gathering turned into a rally and marched to Bagh-Bazar, where the uncrowned king of the anti-partition movement of Bengal, Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee addressed it.

The Government adopted heavy repressive measures to crush the movement. Thousands were jailed, including many prominent national leaders. 'Vande Mataram' was the slogan of the agitation, 'Swadeshi' and 'Boycott', its effective tools. The anti-partition agitation, backed by the Swadeshy and Boycott movement, soon acquired the shape of a national movement and a freedom struggle seeking complete independence for India. In fact, 'Swadeshy Movement' grew out of the anti-partition movement itself. When early protests against the partition did not yield desired results, a multi-pronged strategy was adopted by its leaders to give teeth to the movement. This included the boycott of foreign goods and development of indigenous alternatives by encouraging the establishment of indigenous industries and institutions. This strategy attracted the participation of a large number of people including women who for the first time came out of the four walls of their homes and joined processions and pickets. Social Reforms, National Schools and Colleges, Swadeshy Textile Mills and Industries, recognition to the rich traditions of Indian arts and culture and carrying out of original research in the field of science and technology, were some concepts which gained momentum as a consequence of this movement. Through the Swadeshy Movement, Indians entered into a new phase of the modern nationalistic politics and struggle against colonialism. Surendra Babu, being its main leader, basically asked the people to support the cause from the depth of their hearts. This in the words of one of its most eloquent orators, swept through the whole country, from hamlet to hamlet, from town to town and from province to province. "Vande Mataram' became the battle cry of patriots who dedicated themselves to the great cause, and martyrs went unflinchingly to the scaffold with this magic slogan on their lips. The great slogan 'Vande Mataram' inspired the movement for political, eco-

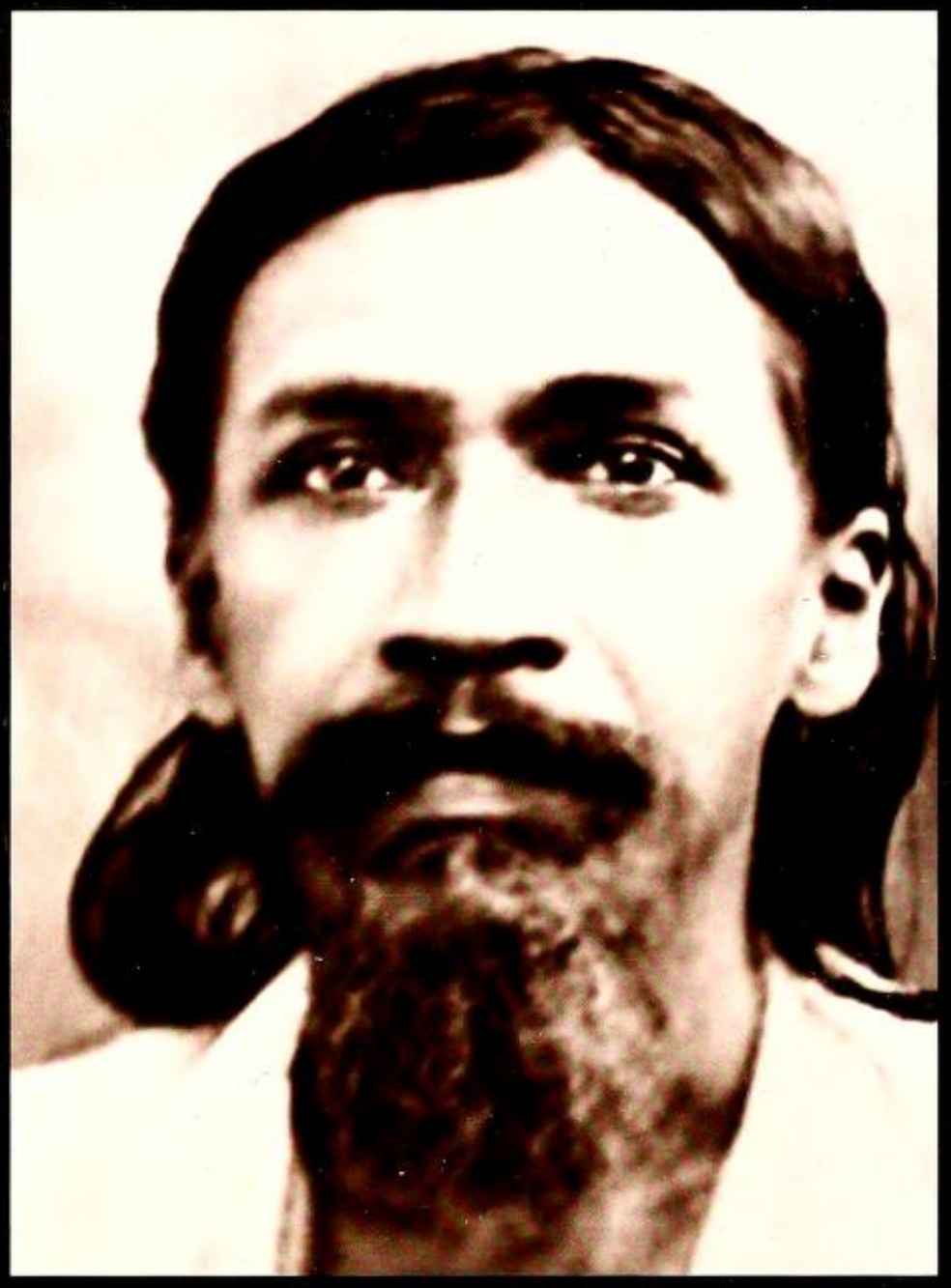
# Proclamation.

Whereas the Government has thought fit to effectuate the Partition of Bengal in spite of the universal protest of the Bengali nation, we hereby pledge and proclaim that we as a people shall do everything in our power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of our Province and to maintain the integrity of our race. So help us God.

Dated this First day of November
in the year Nineteen Hundred
and Five and given under

The national proclamation which used to be read with great ceremony and the Swadeshi oath. (Source-Amrit Bazar Patrika-1947AD)

Bankimchandra Chatterjee



Shri Aurobindo

nomic and cultural independence of India, and the whole world saw 'a puissant nation rousing herself like a strong person after sleep and shaking her invincible locks'. No wonder that the rulers got panicky, and 'Vande Mataram" became the national cry and galvanizing force to unite Indians under one umbrella. The slogan became the hallmark of sedition, and although 'Anand Math' escaped unscathed, public singing of 'Vande Mataram' was banned,[7]

The song Vande Mataram first appeared in Bankimchandra Chatterjee's novel 'Anand Math'. This novel was first serialized in the journal 'Bangadarshan' and later published in book form in 1882. Its writer Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94) was one of the first graduates of the University of Calcutta. He was an officer of the provincial civil and judicial services of the Government of Bengal and rose to literary fame with the publication of his first novel 'Durgeshnandini' in 1864. Shri Aurobindo, himself a poet, was amongst the avant-garde of this movement. In 1907, he wrote in the leading daily journal of the movement 'Vande Mataram': 'a great and vivifying message had to be given to a nation or humanity, and God has chosen the mouth on which to shape the words of the message, a momentous vision had to be revealed, and it is his eyes which the Almighty first unseals'. The song 'Vande Mataram' which was written in a mixture of Sanskrit and Bengali languages was translated into English by Shri Aurobindo.

**VANDE MĀTARAM**

Vande Mātaram
Sujalām suphalām malayaja shitalām;
Shasyashyāmalām Mātaram!
Shubhra jyotsnā-pulakita yāminim,
Phullakusumita-drumadala shobhinim
Suhāsinim sumadhura bhashinim,
Sukhadām varadām Mātaram!

Trimshakotikantha-kalakala-ninādā karālé
Dvitrimshakoti bhujair dhrita-khara karavālé

Abalã kéna mã eta balé!
Bahubaladhãrinim, namãmi tarinin,
Ripudalavãrinim Mãtaram!

Tumi vidyã, tumi dharma,
Tumi hridi, tumi marma,
Tvam hi prãnãh shareré!
Bãhuté tumi mã shakti,
Hridaya tumi mã bhakti,
Tomãri pratimã gari mandire mandiré!
Tvam he Durgã dashapraharana dhãrini,
Kamalã, kamala-dala-vihãrini,
Vãni vidyãdãyini namãmi tvãm
Namãmi Kamalãm amalãm atulam,
Sujalam suphalamMãtram,
Vande Mãtaram!

Shyãmalãm, Saralãm, susmitãm,
bhushitãm.
Dharinim, bharanim Mãtaram.

**TRANSLATION**

I bow to thee, Mother,
Richly-watered, richly-fruited,
Cool with the winds of the south,
Dark with the crops of the harvests
The Mother!

Her nights rejoicing in the glory of the moonlight,
Her lands clothed beautifully with her trees in flowering bloom,
Sweet of laughter, Sweet of speech,
The Mother, giver of boons, giver of bliss!
Terrible with the clamorous shout of seventy million throats,
And the sharpness of swords raised in twice seventy million hands,

Who sayeth to thee, Mother, that thou art weak?
Holder of multitudinous strength,
I bow to her, who saves,
To her who drives from her the armies of her foemen,
The Mother!

Thou art knowledge, thou art conduct,
Thou art heart, thou art soul,
For thou art the life in our body,
In the arm thou art might, O Mother,
In the heart, O Mother, thou art love and faith,
It is thy image we raise in every temple.
For thou art Durga holding her ten weapons of war,
Kamala at play in the lotuses
and speech, the goddess, giver of all lore,
To thee I bow!
I bow to thee, goddess of wealth
pure and peerless,
Richly-watered, richly-fruited,
The Mother!
I bow to thee, Mother
Dark-hued, candid,
Sweetly smiling, jewelled and adorned,
The holder of wealth, the lady of plenty,
The Mother!

Translator's note

It is difficult to translate the National Anthem of Bengal into verse, in another language owing to its unique Union of sweetness, simple directness and high poetic force. All attempts in this direction have been failures. In order, therefore, to bring the reader unacquainted with Bengalee nearer to the exact force of the original, I give the translation in prose line by line.

[Translated by Shri Aurobindo-Shri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Vol-8, 1972 Pp.311-14.]

Following the policy of 'divide and rule', the detractors of the anti-partition movement wanted to create a rift between Hindus and Muslims. To divide the two communities, they promised to make Dacca the capital of the new Muslim majority province (with eighteen million Muslims and twelve million Hindus). Even "Vande Mataram" was given a communal and sectarian interpretation. Commenting on the situation Mahatma Gandhi wrote:
"..... No matter what its source was and how and when it was composed, it had become a most powerful battle cry among

Hindus and Musalmans of Bengal during the partition days. It was an anti-imperialist cry. As a lad, when I knew nothing of Ananda Math or even Bankim, its immortal author, Vande Mataram had gripped me, and when I first heard it sung, it had enthralled me. I associated the purest national spirit with it. It never occurred to me that it was a Hindu song or meant only for Hindus. Unfortunately now we have fallen on evil days. All that was pure gold before has become base metal today. In such times it is wisdom not to market pure gold and let it be sold as base metal. I would not risk a single quarrel over singing Vande Mataram at a mixed gathering. It will never suffer from disuse. It is enthroned in the hearts of millions. It stirs to its depth the patriotism of millions outside Bengal. Its chosen stanzas are Bengal's gift among many others to the whole nation". ('Harijan' , July 1st, 1939)

However, the anti-partition movement also had a great impact on the sound recording industry. This nascent industry had just started and was not even a decade old. The Anti-Partition Movement brought with it a wave of popular patriotic songs, plays and dialogues. The sound recording industry which till now had been happy to record and sell traditional pieces of music, realized the sales potential of patriotic songs and plays and dialogues related to nationalistic feelings. Vande Mataram became hot property. Between 1906 and 1908, several different records of the song were available in the Indian market.

The trendsetter was Hemendra Mohan Bose of H. Bose's records, he recorded 'Vande Matram' in the voice of Rabindra Nath Tagore (H. Bose record number 250) on cylinders and released three recorded versions of 'Vande Mataram' between January to March 1906. Staunch nationalist that he was, Tagore preferred to give his recording of Vande Mataram to H.M. Bose who was the first Indian entrepreneur to manufacture indigenous cylindrical blanks. Two other versions of the song by

'Vande Mataram Sampradaya' and by 'Sevak Sampradaya' founded by Shri Kaliprasanna Kavyavisharad remain untraced so far. The H. Bose Record number 250 of 'Vande Mataram' by Rabindra Nath Tagore was re-issued by Pathe in 1908. Though the initial recording and release of Vande Mataram was an indigenous initiative, its re-issue on Pathe Discs in 1908 had the patronage and approval of M/s Pathe Freres, Paris (France).

Within weeks of the H Bose Record, M/s Nicole Freres (India) Ltd., a related company of M/s Nicole Freres Ltd., London, released a record of Vande Mataram in the voice of Narayon Chandra Mukherjee (10" single sided, record number C-465). This recording was taken by Stephen Carl Porter and was advertised for sale by M/s M.L. Shaw & Company, Calcutta in March 1906. A second version of this record was released almost a year later. This too was a 10" size single sided record (record number C-436). In his book 'Nicole Record',

Narayon Chandra Mukherjee

Vande Matram by Narayon Chandra Mukherjee

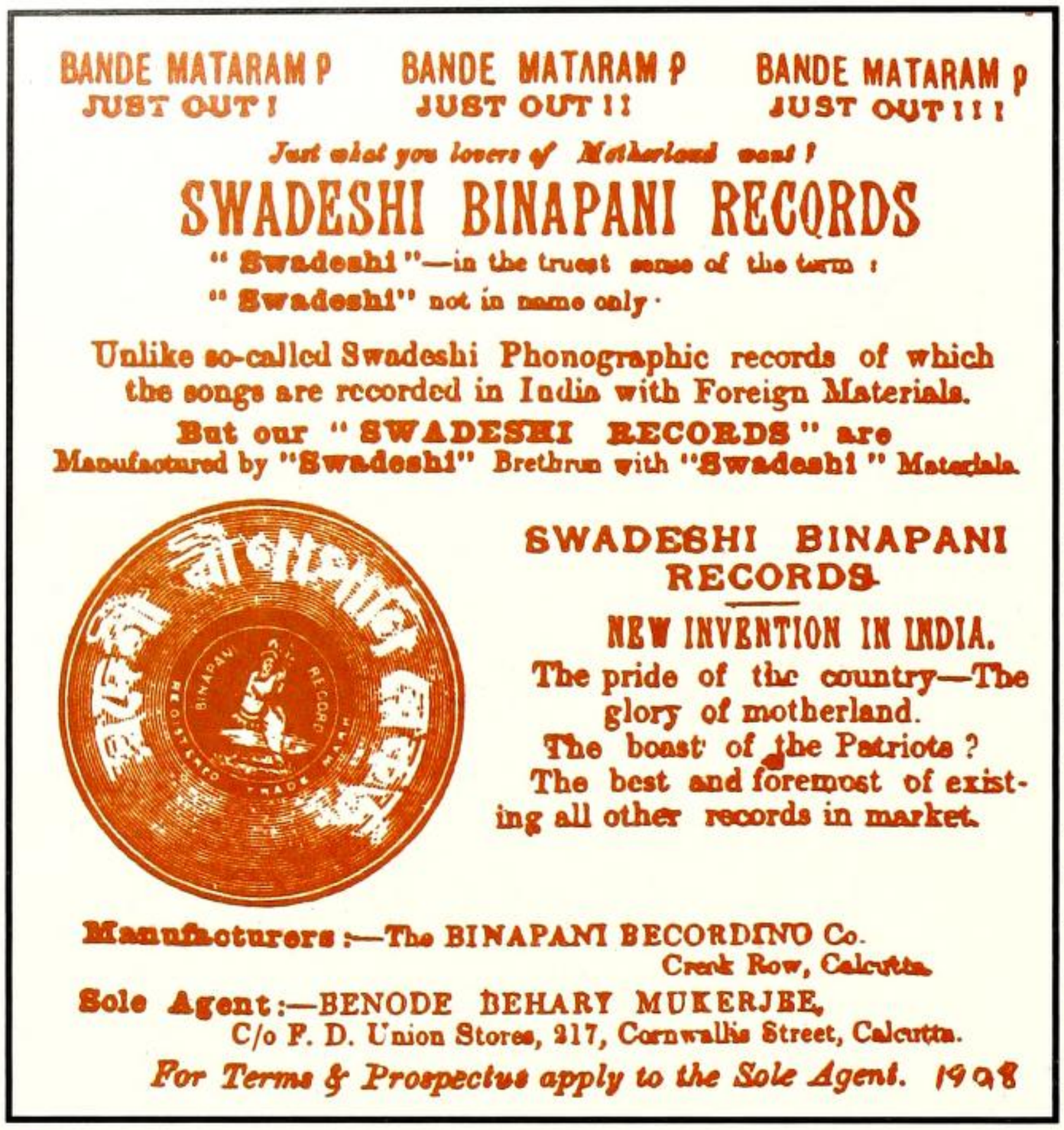
William Conrad
Gaisberg

Michael Kinnear has also mentioned a Nicole record of Vande Mataram (record number C-465) but he also writes that the number of this record is perhaps a misprint for record number C-463 or C-436. H. Bose's Swadeshi cylindrical record of Vande Mataram in the voice of Rabindranath Tagore, therefore, has the distinction of being the first cylindrical record of the song, whereas the one in the voice of Sri Narayon Chandra Mukherjee is the first disc record.

Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee

R.N. Bose's, 12" sized Gramophone Monarch Record was the result of a recording made by William C. Gaisberg in Calcutta in May 1906 on behalf of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd., London, and was made available in the market by September 1906. This was a single sided record with catalogue number 012112.

In November 1907, Beka Records G.m.b.H., Berlin (Germany) recorded Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee's speech on 'Partition of Bangal', 'Swadeshy' and 'Vande-Mataram' in Calcutta. This recording was released as a double sided 10" sized National Grand Record in March 1908. In 'The 78 R.P.M. Record Labels of India', Michael Kinnear mentions that this record features the voice of Babu Surendranath Banerjee, reciting the Swadeshi anthem "Bande Mataram" on one side and a speech, titled 'Swadeshism/Partition of Bengal' on the other(page 200). The fact is, this record has the speech of this great leader on 'Bande Mataram' and 'Swadeshy' on record number 20290 side and his speech on 'Partition of Bengal' on record number 20291 side. Bande Mataram has not been recited by Shri Surendranath Banerjee as referred above. This record has been imported by The Talking Machine and Indian Records Company, Bombay and is 'reproduced at Berlin (Germany)'.


BANDE MATARAM ! JUST OUT !
BANDE MATARAM ! JUST OUT !!
BANDE MATARAM ! JUST OUT !!!
Just what you lovers of Motherland want !
SWADESHI BINAPANI RECORDS
" Swadeshi "—in the truest sense of the term :
" Swadeshi" not in name only.
Unlike so-called Swadeshi Phonographic records of which the songs are recorded in India with Foreign Materials.
But our " SWADESHI RECORDS " are Manufactured by "Swadeshi" Brethren with "Swadeshi " Materials.
SWADESHI BINAPANI RECORDS
NEW INVENTION IN INDIA.
The pride of the country—The glory of motherland.
The boast of the Patriots ?
The best and foremost of existing all other records in market.
Manufacturers :—The BINAPANI RECORDING Co.
Creek Row, Calcutta.
Sole Agent :—BENODE BEHARY MUKERJEE,
C/o F. D. Union Stores, 217, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.
For Terms & Prospectus apply to the Sole Agent. 1908

Swadeshi Binapani Records advertisment

In 1908, George Dillnutt recorded Narayon Chandra Mukherjee's rendition of Vande Mataram for The Gramophone Company Ltd., London. This recording was released as two 10" single sided Gramophone Concert Records (record numbers G.C.-5-12638 and G.C.-5-12639). These records were subsequently deleted in 1909. Obviously, the British authorities had decided to intervene.

In addition, a Calcutta outfit, The Binapani Recording Company, Calcutta also advertised the release of a record of 'Vande-Mataram'. This record was never released.

No doubt the British, French and German recording companies released records of 'Vande Mataram' with an eye on big profits; still, their role in supporting the cause of Indian nationalism must not be undervalued. Specially noteworthy is the German company Beka Records which introduced an altogether new label - the National Grand Record- to present the views and voice of the father of Indian Nationalism, Surendra Nath Banerjee. The company 'Beka Record G.m.b.H., Berlin was formed in 1905 by Heinrich Bumb and Max Koenig, and its brand name i.e. 'Beka' was coined By using the first alphabets of Bumb and Koenig. Therefore, by replacing the term 'Beka' with the term 'National', the German company exhibited an unparalleled gesture on its part to support the cause of Indian Nationalism. While other companies released recordings of Vande Mataram alone, this record had the electrifying and motivating speech on 'Partition of Bengal', 'Vande Mataram' and 'Swadeshy', making it one of the rarest historical documents of India preserved on a recorded disc. This is the first political speech disseminated as a record.

This was the only record, where the word 'National' was used by the manufacturer, with this gesture the German company exhibited solidarity with the cause of Indian Nationalism. This was a singular departure. After recording Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee in Calcutta in November, 1907, the recording was sent to Germany, where it was 'reproduced in Berlin (Germany)" and was imported to India by The Talking Machine and Indian Records Co. Bombay, established by *Shri Vallabhdas Runchordas* in 1906, to market Beka Records in India. This fact of its reproduction in Berlin as well as its import by the Company of Bombay is inscribed on the label.

Another peculiarity that makes this record unique is the fact that the label of this record is yellow, one of the colours of the first "Indian National Flag" introduced in 1906 at the peak of the anti-partition agitation. 'Bande Mataram', one of the subjects of the recorded speech of this record incidentally was also printed in the middle of the first National Flag. "On August 7, 1906AD, the first anniversary of Anti-Partition Movement, a big rally was organized at Parsee Bagan (now Green Park) in Calcutta. For the first time a tricolour flag was unfurled there. The moving spirit behind the design of the flag was

The first Indian National Flag (1906 AD)

Sachindra Prasad Bose, a close follower of Sir Surendranath Banerjee and son-in-law of the moderate Brahmo Leader Krishna Kumar Mitra."[8] Further, "in 1906 on the advice of his friend Sukumar Mitra (son of Krishna Kumar Mitra), he (Sachindra Prasad) pleaded with Sir Surendranath Banerjee for a National Flag and a Swadeshy Movement. Sir Surendranath gladly accepted the proposal. He said, "Design a flag and show it to me". Bose and Sukumar Mitra went back elated to design a flag. The flag they designed had three stripes-green, yellow and red. It had eight half open lotuses on the top green stripe. Vande Mataram in blue on the middle yellow stripe, and the sun and the moon (crescent) in white on the bottom red stripe. They presented the flag to Sir Surendranath who called a meeting for its approval. According to Sukumar Mitra, the meeting was held at the Indian Association Hall, Calcutta and was attended by Sir Asutosh Chowdhary, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi and leaders from all the districts of Bengal. Some of the elders suggested that the eight lotuses representing the then eight provinces of the country be placed according to their respective location on the map of India, instead of showing all the eight in a row on the top green band of the flag. However, Sir Surendranath Benerjee preferred the original design. The meeting too approved it unanimously. This flag was for the first time hoisted at the Parsee Bagan (Green Park) on August 7, 1906, which was observed as Boycott Day to protest against

Dani Babu in
'Siraj-ud-daula'

the partition of Bengal. Narendranath Sen ceremonially consecrated the flag. Bhupendranath Dutt (younger brother of Swami Vivekanand and Editor of 'Jugantar') handed it over to Sir Surendranath Banerjee, who hoisted it to the bursting of a hundred and one crackers. Next day, the ceremony was widely reported in the newspapers, especially in the Yugantar, Sanjivani and Vande Mataram. The Jugantar was the only newspaper to greet the new flag. Some people in the country decried the move for a national flag. For the moderates like Surendranath Banerjee, Ghuznavi and Asutosh Chowdhary the flag was a symbol of the country's aspiration for Home Rule, but the young revolutionaries like Sukumar Mitra, Bhupendranath and Sudhir Benerjee saw in it a dream of Indian revolution. Later, the flag was hoisted on the rostrum of the 1906 session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta, under the president ship of Dadabhoy Naoroji. The badges of more than 1600 delegates who attended the session, too, had the same tri-colour design." [9]

The peculiarities of this record do not appear to be mere coincidences. Not when we know that Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, the Muslim Swadeshy leader and active participant in the nationalist movement, was also the agent of the Beka Record G.m.b.H., Berlin, in Bengal for its Indian repertoires. He sponsored the manufacturing of this record and had also supported the recognition to 'Calcutta Flag', as the first national flag of India. It is logical to infer that he played an important role in conceptualizing the strategy and persuading the company to release such a great historical document.

Contemporary political developments may have helped Sir Abdul in his endeavour as Germany and Great Britain were not on the best of terms with each other. "In 1905AD the German government, estranged from both Russia and England, decided to seize the opportunity of Russia's defeat in the Far East and of her revolution at home in order to force France under German protection and so deprive both Russia and England of any foothold in Western Europe. This was the meaning of the 'first Moroccan crisis', a crisis deliberately provoked by the German government and achieving the dismissal of the French Foreign Minister, Delcassé, at German orders. But thereafter the crisis did not develop according to German plans..... The French, sustained by British diplomatic support, recovered their nerve, and at the conference of Algeciras early in 1906AD, it was the German government which had to climb down. For the Bismarckian Reich, founded on the successes of 1866AD and 1871AD, this was a catastrophe. Ever since 1871AD the memory of these successes had sustained the Reich at home and abroad. Germany had always got her way by threat of war, and none had dared to threaten Germany in return. Now the threat had not worked."[10] This role of England had annoyed the Germans. Secondly, "The

1

2

Record:
Battle of Plassey (1 and 2)

explosion came in the autumn of 1908AD, over the grotesque incident of an interview with William II published in the Daily Telegraph. The interview was in the routine Imperial style, rather more restrained and sensible in fact than usual, an emotional, aggrieved plea for English friendship, naively voicing the bewilderment which most Germans genuinely felt at English resentment against the German navy and German 'world policy'."[11] Therefore the brewing differences and widening gap in Anglo-German relations definitely played an important role in Germany's extending support to the cause of Indian nationalism by authorizing the release of the National Grand Record at a crucial point when British Authorities considered the contents of the record seditious and Anti-British.

This invaluable historical document captures one of the most important events not only in the history of India's struggle for freedom but also in the history of the recording industry.

However, after 1909, for a long period hardly any records of 'Vande Mataram' were released. The reason for this gap is attributed to the fact that in the eyes of the then Government recordings of songs like 'Vande Mataram' or speeches on the subject of 'Swadeshy' or 'Partition of Bengal' were considered inflammatory and as adding fuel to the fire of anti-partition movement in the country. As a consequence, the recording industry and theatrical performances, both came under watchful eyes of the Government. By an order of the then Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, dated 9th December 1908, singing of 'Vande Mataram' and other patriotic songs was proscribed. This led to mass seizure and destruction of these materials. By 1911, after protracted litigation, the Government ultimately succeeded in proscribing eleven plays including Siraj-ud-daula, Mir Kashim, Chhatrapati Shivaji, Durga-Sagar, Palashir Prayaschitta under the provisions of The Dramatic Performance Control Act, 1876.

The British Government went a step further when they also applied The Vernacular Press Act of 1878 and similar draconian Acts to seize patriotic literatures. One such proscribed poem written during 1930 by Vishwanath Sharma presents 'Vande Mataram' in a different electrifying form: (See Box)

This poem somehow survived the onslaught of the draconian law under which British Government proscribed, prohibited and ultimately destroyed many patriotic works and documents including a number of Gramophone records.

The 'National Grand Record' which was extremely seditious in the eyes of the British Government and could have been lost forever, miraculously survived this onslaught and is with us to remind us of the great patriot, Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee and also about his strong conviction and indomitable courage with which he opposed the move for the partition of Bengal, supported 'Swadeshy Movement' and encouraged 'Vande Mataram'.

Kaum Ke Khadim Ki Hai, Jageer Vande-Mataram,
Hai Watan Ke Waste Akseer Vande-Mataram.
Hakimon Ko Hai Udher Bandook per Aapni Guroor,
Hai Edher Ham Bekason Ka Teer Vande-Mataram.
Katla Kar Hamko Na, Aye Katil, Hamare Khun Se;
Teg Per Ho Jayega Tahareer, Vande-Mataram.
Fikra Kya, Jallad Ne Ger Katla Par Bandhi Kamar;
Rok Dega Jore se Shamsheer Vande-Mataram.
Sar Zameen Hil Jayegee Aada Ki Do Hi Roz Mein,
Gar Dikha Laye Kabhi Taaseer Vande-Mataram.
Kis Tarah Bhooloon Ise Main, Jab Ki Kismat Mein Meri,
Likh Chuka Hai Rakeeb-e-Taqudeer Vande-Mataram.
Santaree Bhi Muztareeb Hai Jab Ki Har Jhankaar Se,
Boltee Hai Jail Mein Zanjeer Vande-Mataram.
Julm Se Gar Kar Diya Khamosh Mujhko Dekhana,
Bol Utthegee Meri Tasveer Vande-Mataram!

**TRANSLATION**

Vande-Mataram is the estate of the servant of the nation, it is a panacea for the nation. The rulers take pride in their guns, we poor folks have Vande-Mataram for an arrow. Don't kill us assassin (because) our blood will print Vande-Mataram on your sword. What if the killer is bent upon killing me, the force of Vande-Mataram will stop his sabre. This land could be free in a couple of days if only Vande-Mataram could show its effect. How can I forget this legend when it has been engraved by the writer of destinies. Even the sentries are familiar with the jangle of chains (as) each chain recites Vande-Mataram. If you are able to quite me by using force, my picture will shout- Vande-Mataram!

(Retrieved from the files of the Regional Archive, Dehradun)

Gauhar Jan with Zohra Bai
(an early photograph recreation)

COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE TYPE "B," or "EAGLE," 1898

# 3 GAUHARS, MALKAS AND ZOHRAS

The tales about Gauhar, Malka and Zohra evoke memories of the trinity of the great singer-dancers who lived during the last quarter of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Their music ruled the hearts of music lovers of their day and its lingering magic continues today. At the head of the trinity was Gauharjan of Calcutta (Miss Angelina Yeoward). This nightingale of Bengal was a rare combination of beauty, brains and a bewitching voice. She had the distinction of being the first dancing girl of Armenian origin in India and was also the first major singer to be recorded in the first recording expedition of 1902 (her discs were released in 1903).

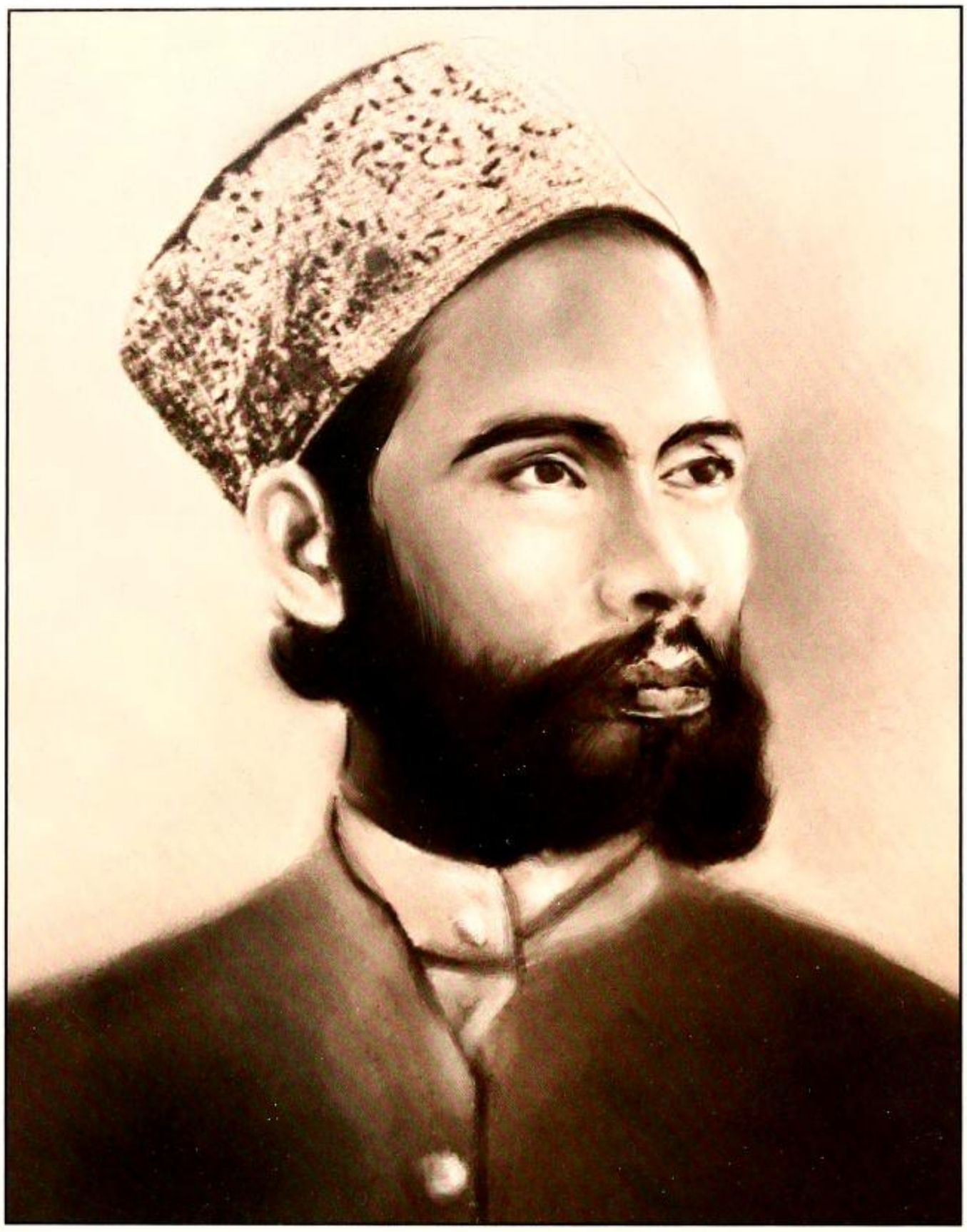
Miss Mulkajan

Gauhar was born at Azamgarh in the present day Uttar Pradesh where her father William Robert Yeoward, an Armenian, served as an engineer in a dry ice factory. In 1870, he married a beautiful and talented Jewish girl Edilian Victoria Imangus (or Hemming) who had a deep interest in Indian music. In 1873, the Yeowards were blessed with a daughter Angelina.

As years passed by, Edilian realised matrimony had pushed her dream of pursuing a career in music to the backburner. Finding no support from her husband, she developed an intimacy with a musically inclined man Khursheed and moved to Benaras, the hub of Hindustani classical music.

In Benaras, Edilian converted to Islam and adopted a new name, Malka. She started calling little Angelina, Gaura-short for Gauhar. Malka devoted herself to rigorous riyaz which earned her recognition among the music lovers of Banaras. However, Banaras was too small to contain Malka's grand dream. In 1883, she moved to Calcutta, the seat of British Raj in those days, with her little Gaura. By now Malka was known as Badi Malka which distinguished her from other contemporary Malkas like Malka Chulbulee and Malkajan of Agra. Soon, she became famous as a singer-dancer and was being invited for mehfils in Calcutta and beyond.

The book, "Vaarvadhu Vivechan" identifies Badi Malkajan, the mother of Gauharjan, as one of the leading songstresses who contributed to the crys-



Ustad Mamman Khan

tallization of the Banaras style of Thumri. It is an acknowledged fact that before Haidarijan (Haidarijan Chunewali of Lucknow), thumri was more inclined towards the classical side. With Badi Malka, Thumri attained a new form and identity; with her daughter, Gauhar, thumri reached new heights.

Malka and Gauhar enjoyed enormous clout and popularity among the music lovers of Calcutta. Once, when the organisers of a "Fancy Fair", banned the entry of Malka and Gauhar to their fair, the local music lovers sided with the mother-daughter duo and not only did they boycott the "Fancy Fair", they also organized a highly successful, rival event "Mohan Mela" for them.

Badi Malka was a regular at the mehfils of the Sanichara Club of Gaya, Bihar. As the name suggests, this weekend club met every Saturday, the musical mehfils were hosted by the then club president, Maharaja Gopal Sharan Singh of Tekari (Gaya). Contemporary luminaries Dhelabai, the famous singer from Muzaffarpur, Talabai, Rajeshwari Bai of Banaras, Harmonium players Sohnee Babu of Gaya and Irshad Miyan were the other regulars.[1]

The Beka Grand Company released Badi Malka under its prestigious white label. These records describe the name of the artist as "Mulkajan". Her "Jao-Jao Tose Na Boloon, Sautan Ke Sang Raho" (record number 1582/one-sided) and "Dilamai Chahoo Tujai Pahoo", (record number 1583/one-sided) present a voice distinctly different from the voices of the other contemporary Malkas.

While pursuing her own career in music, the astute Badi Malka also concentrated on training her daughter. She roped in contemporary music legends to teach her the ropes of music and presentation. The list of Gauhar's tutors and accompanists reads like a Who's Who of music: famous Shrijan Bai trained Gauhar in Dhrupad and Dhamar, Kallu Ustad or Ustad Kale Khan of Patiala taught her pure and light classical Hindustani Music. (Some scholars believe that Kallu Ustad may well have been the well-known Khayal singer and Sarangiya Kallu Dhannu Dhari)[2] ; Ali Baksh and Kathak maestro Bindadin Maharaj taught her Kathak and the legendary Charan Dass, Bengali Keertan. She also trained with masters like Shiv Prasad Mishra, Bhaiya Saheb Ganpat Rao, Ustad Maujjuddin Khan, Peara Saheb of Mettiaburj, Ustad Nazir Khan of Rampur, great vocalist and Sarangiya Bechu Ustad or Bechu Misra. Subsequently, Bechu Misra's son, Ustad Gauri Shankar Misra became the chief accompanist of Gauharjan.[3] Ustad Mamman Khan Sarangiya, son of Ustad Sangi Khan and uncle (and father-in-law) of the great Sarangiya Ustad Bundu Khan, too was a

Sarangee accompanist of Gauharjan. She also learnt a number of Indian and foreign languages under her mother and other teachers.

True to her mother's expectations, Gauhar gave her debut performance at Darbhanga State (Bihar) at fifteen and was appointed Court Musician. She was also a regular participant at the annual music function organized by the Maharaja of Bettiah. The exposure to such rarified musical heights and her proximity to Bhaiya Saheb Ganpat Rao and Thumri Samrat Ustad Mojjuddin Khan, helped her emerge as one of the best Thumri singers of all times. Gauhar may well be credited with pioneering the trend of dancing and simultaneously singing Thumri in a mehfil.

By 1896, Gauhar had begun to perform in Calcutta. A famous Thumri singer, she was also well versed in Khayal, Dadra, Tappa, Bhajan, Hori and Kajree; and also composed many bandishes. "Her main and real Tan Kartab was creation of seriousness and depth in Gamak, grace in Meerh and Aash, embellishment (Alankar) in Murki and richness in Jamjama [4]."
"So far as her physical beauty was concerned, by now she had grown up as a beautiful person possessing tresses of good black hair, a strikingly intellectual forehead; magnificent lustrous eyes, and a very pretty magnetic face, with an exquisitely moulded figure of medium height [5]."

Gauhar's patrons and admirers showered upon her wealth and expensive jewellery. Another source of her income was the sale of tickets for her programmes. She was a multi-millionaire, the richest professional singer-dancer of her day, she maintained a fleet of cars and phaetons.

Pioneer sound-recordist F.W.Gaisberg noted her preference for gorgeous clothes and ornaments: "Every time she came to record she amazed us by appearing in a new gown, each one more elaborate than the last. She never wore the same jewels twice. Strikingly effective were her deli-

Miss Mulkajan

Gauharjan

cate black gauze draperies embroidered with real gold lace, arranged so as to present a tempting view of a bare leg and a naked navel. She was always bien soignée. Addis, our sales manager, and I made a guess at her age. I thought she was twenty-two, he put her down at twenty-five, but we were both wrong. Though she looked like a young girl, she was forty-five." [6]. In fact Gaisberg started recording Gauharjan in November 1902 and if he made this conclusive observation about her age that she was forty five at that time, it suffers with anomaly because Gauhar being born in 1870 was only thirty at that time.

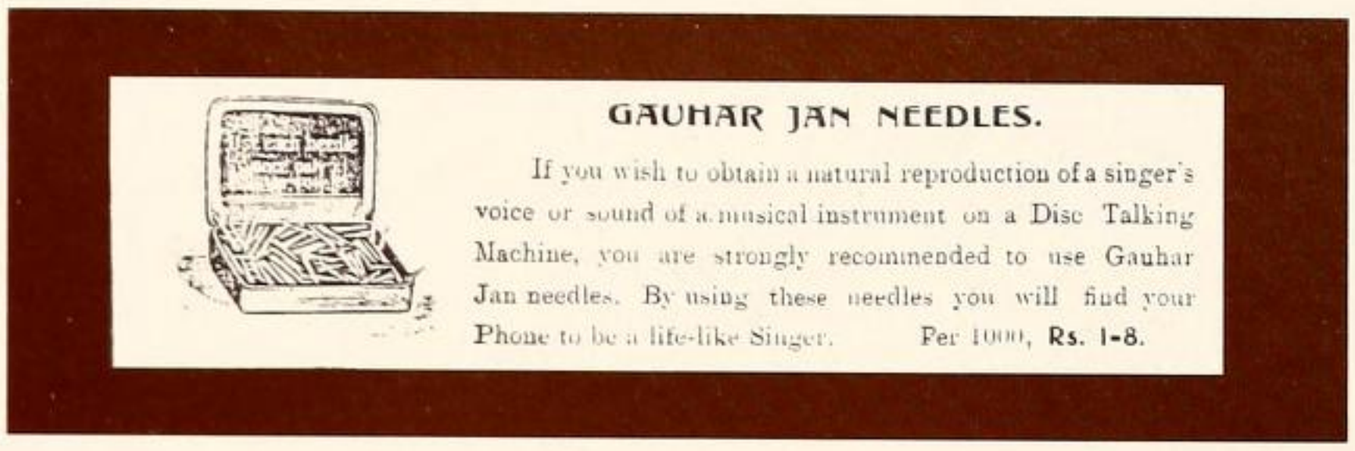
At the peak of her glorious Calcutta years, she used to go for a pleasure drive in her grand phaeton drawn by seven well-groomed horses through some of the important thorough-fares of Calcutta. One evening, the Governor's cavalcade crossed her's on the main road. Not knowing who she was, and deeply impressed by her regal looks, the Governor reportedly removed his hat, bowed his head and let her go ahead. Later on, when he learnt who she was, he was quite enraged. He issued an order that she should not go for a drive through the main road, which was his usual route in the evening. But Gauharjan imperiously flouted his orders[7]. It is said that she kept on depositing the fine of Rs.1000/- per day for 20 days and continued her pleasure drive through the same route. Ultimately, the Governor had to cancel his orders.

In 1911, The Prayag Sangeet Samittee, invited her to participate in a function and paid her Rs.1000/-, an astronomical sum in those days, for her performance. She also had the rare honour of having performed during the Coronation Ceremony of King George Vth when she and Jankibai (Chappanchuri of Allahabad) sang "Yeh Hai Tajposhi Ka Jalsa, Mubarak Ho, Mubarak Ho" and received one hundred Guineas as a gift from the King.

Gauhar was so popular that a manufacturer of Gramophone pins or needles which

were used in playing 78 R.P.M. discs in those days, named his product "Gauharjan Needles". The advertisement read: " If you wish to obtain a natural reproduction of a singer's voice or sound of a musical instrument - on a Disc Talking-machine, you are strongly recommended to use" Gauharjan Needle." By using these needles you will find your phone to be a life like singer." The price quoted for these needles was Re. One and Annas eight for 1000 needles. Her picture postcards were also very popular collectible items.

A true star, Gauharjan's exclusive lifestyle created quite a buzz and stories about her regal tantrums were legion. The Raja of Datiya was keen to have Gauharjan perform at a mehfil in his palace. Gauhar was at the peak of her career and considered Datiya small fry, she declined numerous invitations of the Raja. The fact was, she wasn't aware of the rich musical tradition of the state and the Raja's knowledge of music. The Raja of Datiya, a great Pakhawaj player himself, was also the patron of the legendary Pakhawajiya Kudau Singh. Kudau Singh had an imposing personality and was renowned to be blessed with the divine powers of goddess Kali- he once calmed a rogue elephant by playing Pakhawaj in the "Gaj Paran" mode. So impressed was the Raja with his performance that he gifted him the elephant. Well aware of the Raja's fondness for the elephant, Kudau Singh rode the elephant for a while and returned it to the Raja. To persuade Gauharjan participate in the mehfil organised on the eve of the Tilak ceremony of the Crown Prince of Datiya, the Raja sought help from the British administration. Ultimately Gauharjan agreed. A special train with eleven bogies was arranged to carry Gauharjan and her associates to Datiya. Her retinue consisted of a number of accompanists, a battery of servants, her hakim, bodyguard and friends Miss Dooannijan and Miss Chawannijan of Delhi. She and her troupe were accorded a grand welcome, but the Raja was not about to forget Gauhar's stubbornness.


GAUHAR JAN NEEDLES.
If you wish to obtain a natural reproduction of a singer's voice or sound of a musical instrument on a Disc Talking Machine, you are strongly recommended to use Gauhar Jan needles. By using these needles you will find your Phone to be a life-like Singer. Per 1000, Rs. 1-8.

Advertisement: Gauharjan Needles

The celebration progressed and invited artists performed one after another. Gauharjan was not called to perform. This was the Raja's sweet revenge. Realising her folly, Gauharjan apologized to the Raja for her behaviour in the past and requested for a chance to perform. The Raja obliged. Already overwhelmed with the hospitality of the Raja, the troupe outperformed itself to please their annoyed host. The effort worked too. The pleased Raja offered to present Gauharjan with any gift of her choice. Gauhar chose the same elephant which had been earlier gifted to Kudau Singh. However, on learning about the related incident, she changed her mind. She was given a grand see-off by the state: like a visiting deity, Gauhar was taken around the city of Datiya in a procession riding the same elephant.

Another story about Gauhar's temperament relates to Benajirbai of Darbhanga (Bihar), an extremely beautiful courtesan in the Court of the Maharaja of Darbhanga who was excessively fond of jewellery. Once, when Benajir's performance was not up to the mark, Gauharjan sarcastically commented that in a mehfil it is the quality of one's performance which glitters, not the ornaments. Shamed, the young tawaif approached the father of Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, the doyen of Kirana Gharana, for talim. Constant practice for almost a decade brought purity and perfection to Benajir's singing. A polished, well-trained Benajir performed in a mehfil where Gauharjan was also present. An impressed Gauharjan graciously complimented Benajir telling her that now both her performance and her jewellery glitter.[8]

Miss Dooannijan of Delhi, who was also a

Doanni Jan :the Gramophone Concert Record

Gauhar Jan : the Gramophone Concert Record

member of the Datiya troupe, was a famous courtesan of Delhi and a friend of Gauharjan. She sang in Hindustani, Punjabi and Persian. Dooannijan was first recorded by William Conrad Gaisberg during 1906-1907 on behalf of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. As a result of this recording session, her nine 10" size Gramophone Concert Records (record numbers G.C.-3-13686 to G.C.-3-13693) and three 12" size Gramophone Monarch records (record numbers 013138 to 013140) were released. Among these, her record number GC-3-13688 of "Dadra Keharwa" with the lyrics "Dekho Jao Ho Balma" was quite a popular number. Miss Dooannijan was again recorded on behalf of The Gramophone Company Ltd. by F.W. Gaisberg and George Dillnutt during the recording session of 1908-1910. Some of her famous songs recorded during this session are: Thumri Khammach Aada Chautala "Na Chedo Saiyan Karungee Tose Larayee" (record number G.C.-4-13056); Dadra Zila "Najaria Ki Kari Katari Mohe Mari"( record number G.C.-4-13426).

Gauharjan also used to participate in mehfils organised by Chaudhraine Nanua and Bachhuwa of Lucknow. They were good singers and great Kathak dancers and were disciples of the legendary Kathak Guru Kalka Prasad. Once they organised a mehfil at their kotha in which both, Zohrabai Aagrewali and Gauharjan participated. As per the established custom, the mehfil started with the performance of the host and then Zoharabai Aagrewali, an excellent Khayal singer, took turn. The audience was quite enthralled by her performance. But Gauhar was soon to weave a spell of

magic. She sang her famous Thumri in Gara "Pani Bhare-ree Albelee Nar Jhamajham", Bashir Khan was accompanying her on harmonium and was in top form. It cast a mesmerizing effect on all those present. The earlier performances were completely overshadowed.[9]

Since Gauharjan considered Kirana Gharana as one of the sources of her learning, she respected Ustad Abdul Karim Khan as one of her Gurus. At one such mehfil organised by Abdul Karim Khan at Pune in her honour, Abdul Karim Khan's son Abdul Rehan Khan (Alias Suresh Babu Mane) was also present. After finishing her singing she bowed before Abdul Karim Khan and presented Nazrana (Gift) to her Guru as per the prevalent custom in those days.[10]

Prof. D.P. Mukherjee and Pt. Dileep Chandra Bedi, who witnessed Gauharjan perform, considered her renderings of Khayal and Thumri as superb. Prof. D.P. Mukherjee wrote: "In our days there was a great singer Gauharjan, but she was unapproachable. Yet, where there is a will, there is a way. I managed to sneak into her house one night in the company of someone belonging to the underworld of music. She was entertaining a Nawab. She sang Adana, Bahar, Suha and Sughrai, but the Nawab's preference was for Thumri which she sang in one of her sensuous veins with lot of bhava-batana for which she was famous. Later on, I had more public opportunities of listening to her. It is a pity that today's world does not know, what a great Khayal singer was lost in the voluptuous folds of thumri. To please her audience, Gauharjan would sing Pushtu songs -anything bizarre and clever! But Pandit Bhatkhande told me that she was the greatest woman singer of his time. He must be correct. If you ask me now, I would only place Kesarbai by the side of Gauharjan. Kesarbai is the

Gauhar jaan with Doanni jaan and Chavanni jaan.

Gauhar Jan in a recording session

queen of Indian Music as Faiyaz Khan was the king."[11]

The grand old man of Hindustani music, Pandit Bhatkhande too recognised her as a great Khayal singer.

In the words of musicologist Thakur Jaideva Singh: "Gauharjan was without a peer in her Thumri singing and in her rendering of other light classical types. Once I attended an unforgettable night-long competition, which started at 8:00 p.m. between Gauharjan and Malkajan of Agra. It was a fascinating session of Sawal-Jawab (challenges and repartees through music) between two great veterans in the field of music."

Gauharjan was popular not only in North India but also in South India. On 20th April, 1912, she performed at the Browning Institute. The Indian Music journal of Mysore reported that for her two hour concert, the hall was packed to capacity. About her voice, repertoire and performance, the editor, Shri H.P. Krishna Rao wrote:"...she sang Hindustani, Carnatic, and English pieces with style, expression and beauty. Miss Gauhar possessed a sweet-voice uniformly grand and effortless. The notes are faultless and simple. Everything is precise and accurate. Her beautiful singing produced in the mind of the hearer, that kind of agreeable illusion which one experiences when rocked in a cradle. Miss Gauhar's dance gesticulations in which facial expression plays an important part, is far above the standard, we have observed in other Indian dances."[12]

Like her mother Malkajan, who penned "Makhzan-e-Ulfat-e-Mallika", Gauharjan too was a good writer and composer of gazals. This gazal is a testimony of her poetic talent-

Neem Bismil Chhorne Se, Tujhko Hasil Kya Hua,
Aaj wah Kasbal Tera Ai Teg-e-Qatil Kya Hua.
Ai Falak Is Julm Se Kya Badh Gaya Tera Urooj,
Khak Me Hum Ko Milaya, Tujhko

Hasil Kya Hua.
Kiske Gam Me Rote - Rote Gul Gaye Sarta Kadam,
Raat Bhar Me Haal Tera, Shamm-e-Mehfil Kya Hua.
Unka Aana To Kuja wah Aur Bhi Mujhse Khiche,
Kyon Asar Ulta Mera A Jazba - e - Dil Kya Hua.
Kya Kahen Gauhar Mitai Aabroo Is Ishq Ne,
Chhod Baithe Hum Sabko Dil, Us Pai Mayal Kya Hua.

(What did you get out of leaving me half dead?
O mighty sword of the murderer, what happened to your might today?
Did this atrocity add to your prestige?
O heaven? What did you gain from reducing me to dust?
Mourning whom did the blossoms wilt?
In one night what have you come to
O light of the council?
He stopped coming to me, he became even more distant.
Why did my love have this adverse effect?
What can Gauhar say, this love has ruined my honour-
I left everyone and my reward is a broken heart.)

Her musical abilities and fame led The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. recording experts Frederick William Gaisberg and George Dillnutt to record Gauhar during their first Far Eastern recording tour of 1902-1903 at Calcutta. Her first recording session commenced on 11th November 1902. An awestruck Gaisberg reports, "That evening we heard another celebrated singer, Goura Jan, an Armenian-Jewess who could sing in twenty languages and dialects. Her great hit that evening was an adaptation of "Silver Threads Among the Gold." Her fee was 300 rupees per evening and she used to make a brave show when she drove at sundown on the Maidan in a fine carriage and pair. Hers were among the six hundred records which proved a firm foundation for our new enterprise".

Gaisberg was to remember Gauharjan as a gorgeous diva, "When she came to record, her suite of musicians and attendants appeared even more imposing than those who used to accompany Melba and Calve. As the proud heiress of immemorial folk-music traditions she bore herself with becoming dignity. She knew her own market value, as we found to our cost when we negotiated with her."

Her flair for the dramatic is well illustrated by the feast she once provided for her cat when she produced a litter of kittens. This affair cost her twenty thousand rupees, hundreds of guests were invited. Naturally the feast became the talk of the bazaars.

Her recording session continued on 12th November 1902. By now, Gaisberg had already realised that he had hit a goldmine and the artist before him was going to prove a money spinner for his company. After all Gauhar had sung for him in as many as thirteen languages- Hindustani, Mohammaden (Urdu), Sanskrit, Bengali, Arabic, Turkish, Madrasi, Gujrati, Katchchi, Tailungi, English, Peshawari and Gurmes- in the first recording session itself. Some representative records from this session are: record numbers G.C.-13061 - "Nazar Teri Ho Gai Jigar Ke Par" (Gara Dadra - Hindustani); 13146-"Bhalo Basibe Baley Bhalo Basiney (Bengali)"; 13037 - "Dagar Na Jaani Jaibey Kaise, (Dadra-Mohammaden)"; 13039 - "A Dadra Song" (Madrasi); 13144- "Jna Bali Champa li" (Gujrati); 13145 "Sob Koi Na Tarda Jhala" (Tailungi); 13148 - "My love is like a little bird" (English); 13147 - "A Pahil (Pahari) Song" (Peshawari); 13143 - "Fee Mashi Naio" (Gurmes); G.C.-13058 - "Aainta Habibi Aana Garibum" (Arabic); G.C.-13059 - "Aayu Na Maal Hain Jo" (Katchchi); G.C.-13060 - "Paad Shahem Majook Yesha" (Turkish); and G.C.-13062 - a Sanskrit one. Altogether twenty-nine recordings, nine in 7" size records (Gramophone Records Label) and twenty in 10" size records (Gramophone Concert

Gauhar Jan : different lables

label) were released. Since these first discs were pressed at Hanover Germany, a few of them show the name of "Miss Gauharjan" as "Gauhaojan" due to incorrect decipherment of the announcement of the name made by the artist.

Gauharjan's records in Mahomedan(Urdu), Madrasi(Tamil), Gurmes, Gujrati, Tailungi(Telgu), Peshawari, Katchhi, Arabic and Sanskrit have the distinction of being the first commercial Indian disc records of these languages recorded in India and are of great archival value.

Released in the Indian market during 1903, these twenty-nine records sold like hot cakes. Encouraged by this unexpected response the company decided to make more records with Gauharjan. As a consequence, William Sinkler Darby recorded her during the recording session of 1904-05 and twenty-five of her recordings (record numbers GC-13854 to G.C.-13876, G.C.-13842 and G.C.-13843) were released in 10 size (Gramophone Concert) records. Sixteen of these records were of Hindustani songs and the remaining of Bangla songs. Record numbers G.C.-13856 (Gara-Thumri)- with the lyrics "Aan Ban Jiya Mein Lago"; G.C.13873

(Soruth), with the lyrics "Shyam Re Mori Bahiyan Gaho Na"; and G.C.-13875 (Piloo), with the lyrics "Chinhat Nahin Badal Gaye Naina" were some famous numbers from this series.

Gauharjan's salability as an artist established her as a super star and mascot of the The Gramophone &Typewriter Ltd. In April 1906 too, the company recorded Gauhar through William Conrad Gaisberg at Calcutta. As a result of this recording session, twelve 10" size Gramophone concert Records (G.C. - 3-13013 to G.C. - 3-13024) and thirteen 12" size Gramophone Monarch Records (13041 to 13053) were released. This session has two firsts to its credit- the first release of Gauharjan's 12" size "Gramophone Monarch Records" and her records in Pushtoo and Persian languages. Some popular numbers from this series are- record numbers G.C.-3- 13015 with the lyrics "Jao Jao Mose Na Bolo Sautan Ke Sang Raho", 013048 with the lyrics "Maza Detein Hain Kya Yaar Tere Bal" (Dadra), and 013051 with the lyrics "Yeh Nathi Hamari Kismet Ke "(Gazal Desh Pahari). In his memoir "The Romance of recording", Gaisberg salutes Guaharjan: "I know of only one case where one (nautch girls) of them, became a great

Gauhar jan : different lables

Gauhar Jan : "His Master's Voice"

Gauhar Jan : "The Twin Record"

artist, and that was Gauharjan, who was really delightful and very intelligent. She sang in several different languages including Persian. She was a great favourite throughout India and was one of the very few artists whose records could be sold all over the Country."

Regarding the prevailing conditions of recording rooms and seating arrangements of artists, Gaisberg recollects: "during the recording, the artists and the orchestra sit on a large dining room table. This is done in order to bring their mouths level with the

Miss Gauhar jan :
James Opera Records

recording horns; ordinarily they would perform sitting on the floor. The artists are all barefooted, so that having them seated on the table gives one an excellent chance to see their feet on which they wear jewellery, instead of on their fingers."

In the next recording session of April 1908, Gauharjan was again recorded for The Gramophone Company Ltd. by Frederick William Gaisberg, he had made her debut recordings in 1902. As a consequence of this session some twenty-five

recordings under Gramophone Concert label records of 10 size (number G.C.- 4-13248 to G.C.-4-13257, G.C.-4-13262 to G.C.-4-13275 and G.C. -4-13225) were released. "Ras Ke Bhare Tore Nayan" (record number G.C.-4-13249/Bhairvi Dadra); "Raseeli Matwaliyon Ne Jadu Dala" (G.C.-4-13250/Bhairvi Titala); and "Khelat Krishna Kumar Re" (G.C.-4-13269/Kafi Jat) were some of the popular numbers of this series. Another record of Gauharjan (record number G.C.-8-13166 of Sindhu Kafi) was recorded by George Dillnutt in December 1908.

Sound recordist Arthur Spottiswoode Clarke recorded twenty-eight of Gauharjan's songs in December 1913.

Two famous numbers from this series are: "Holi Khelat Khwaja Moinuddin" (record number G.C.-12-13038/Holi); "Na Maro Pitchkari Chhailla" (G.C.-12-13042/Paraj Holi). Some of these recordings were subsequently reissued under HMV and Twin record labels.

Gauharjan also gave recordings for other recording labels like Nicole, Singer, Sun-Disc, James-Opera, Pathe etc.

Record numbers 105, 106, 117, and 118 are some of her recordings released under "Sun-Disc" label. Similarly, the number "Sham Ki Base Surat Mein" (record number 1283) was issued under Nicole label. A number of her records have also been spotted under Pathe label. Some of them are record numbers 46068, 46069, 46070, 46071 (all Bangla songs) and Disque Pathe record number 46990 (Holi) with the lyrics "Sari Dar Diyo Mope" and record number 46999 of Thumri "Dag Mag Hai Re". These Pathe records have hand etched descriptions of its make, number, title of the song, and name of artist, and are the centre-start type. All the above 6 Pathe records of Miss Gauharjan are rare ones and were recorded in 1912 after the re-organisation of The Pathe Phone & Cinema Company and change of its name to The Pathephone

India Company Ltd. In fact, the masters of these recordings were sent to Chatau, Paris and Forest, Belgium for pressing of discs. "A number of discs did arrive in India for sale, but their masters were destroyed as Pathe's Forest, Belgium factory was occupied by the German Army and their Chatau, Paris factory was almost converted into an ammunition producing factory, during World War I".[13] The loss of these "masters" is thus an irreparable loss to Indian Music.

Gauharjan was also recorded under Royal label which is represented by a single record. This record of Gauharjan's has the distinction of being the first indigenously manufactured disc record by an Indian Company M/s Mukherjee and Mukharji, 152 Harrison Road, Calcutta, using Indian technology. The company was owned by Shri Surendra Nath Mukharji.

Miss Gauhar Jan under Sun Disk records

In "The Gramophone Company's First Indian Recordings 1899-1908." Michael S. Kinnear writes: "By late 1906, Mukherjee and Mukharji were advertising the introduction of their "Own make of disc record", and were inviting potential customers to see and hear their discs which were being exhibited at the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition held at Calcutta during December 1906 and March 1907. Mukherjee and Mukharji were awarded a first Class Certificate for their "Swadeshi Record" at the Exhibition, having only been beaten in the Gold Medal Award by H. Bose who had received the top award for his manufacture of cylinder blanks in




Gauhar Jan : Disque Pathe records

The rare record of miss Gauhar Jan :
The Royal Record

Calcutta. Mukherjee and Mukharji's "Own make of disc record" was described as being a single side recorded disc of a black and unbreakable material, selling for two rupees each. The disc was given the label name of ROYAL RECORD and was advertised as having available some recordings of such well known artists as

Miss Gaharjan (Miss Gauhar Jan) and Miss Noori (Miss Nara Sundari Dassi). Although advertised regularly in several Calcutta newspapers during the early months of 1907, the ROYAL RECORD appears to have been eclipsed by April 1907." [Page no. 47]

Kinnear goes on "Although the introduction of the ROYAL RECORD does not appear to have been successful, it marks the first serious attempt to take recordings, manufacture and market disc records in India, by an Indian enterprise. Between Hemendra Mohan Bose and Surendra Nath Mukharji, sound recording in India may well have developed into an indigenous industry were it not for the sheer technological superiority and immense financial resources of the foreign owned recording companies. Unfortunately no examples of the ROYAL RECORD have been located to assess their importance as the first disc records to have been manufactured in India." [Page no. 48]

Gauharjan's ROYAL RECORD therefore is also an example under this lable which was not found by Kinnear.
Being one of the first and rarest disc records of Indian discography, manufactured by employing Indian technology at a time when the mantra of Swadeshism was at its peak, its quality of recording vis-à-vis its multinational counterparts provides us with great opportunity to make a comparative study of the technologies employed.

A diva on the professional front, Gauhar's personal life was not so great- her wealth created a lot of envy, her marriage to her tabla accompanist Saiyyad Gulam Abbas Mirza was a failure and resulted in bitter litigation. The worst shock for her was the loss of her fabulous jewellery when a flunkey of a royal state replaced her precious jewels with cheap imitation jewellery. In her last days she migrated to the Mysore Darbar where she died unsung in 1930.

It is a bitter irony that a popular sher credited to Akbar Allahabadi- "Ada hai, husn hai, sin hai, sabhi jauhar hain ai Gauhar; Magar ek ye kami hai, ki tu rakhti nahi shauhar" aptly sums up this great artist's worldly journey.

In addition to Gauharjan of Calcutta, the Indian music scenario had a number of other Gauhars- Munsarimwali Gauhar, Gauharjan of Jaipur, Miss Gauhar (Parsi Theatre), Gauharjan of Patiala, Miss Gauhar (Bijapur), Gauhar (Junagadh) and Gauhar Mamajiwala (singer-actress associated with Ranjit Studio, Bombay and its owner Sardar Chandulal Shah).[14] Some of these Gauhars were recorded by various recording companies.

So far as Munsarimwali Gauhar is concerned, Late Susheela Misra has written at page 98 in her book "Some Immortals of Hindustani Music" that, after attending one of her (Gauharjan Calcutta) impressive mehfils in Calcutta in 1896, Abdul Haleem Sharar wrote his chapter on "Courtesans and Theatre" in the book, " The Last Phase of an Oriental Culture". Here Sharar mentioned that "It is unlikely that anywhere else were there more perfect demonstrators of dance than the Courtesans of Lucknow. Forty years ago a celebrated Courtesan, Munsarimwali Gauhar, went to Calcutta and achieved fame. At one performance I witnessed her skill in batana on the same theme for full three hours. All those present in the gathering, including the most expert dancers and distinguished people of Mettiaburj were spellbound. There was not even a child who was not impressed by the performance".

Late Susheela Misra has considered Munsarimwali Gauhar, and Gauharjan of Calcutta as one and the same artist. However this does not appear to be a correct conclusion. This is because, if Sharar saw Gauharjan of Calcutta dancing at Mettiaburj during 1896, and complemented "Forty years ago a celebrated Courtesan, Munsarimwali Gauhar went to Calcutta", then forty years prior to 1896

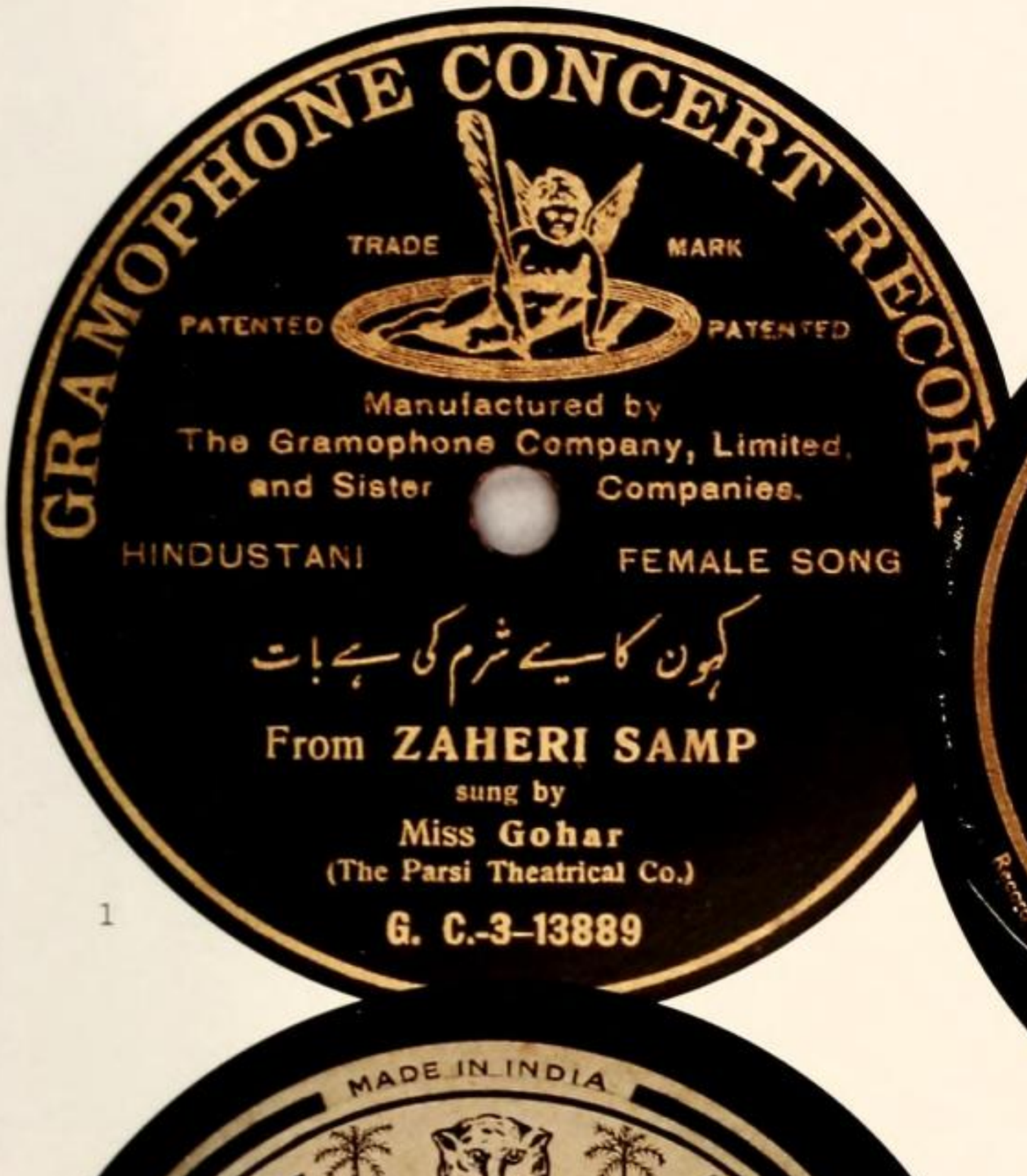
Miss Gauhar, Bombay

was 1856. And 1856, thus cannot be the year of birth of Gauharjan of Calcutta because Late Smt.Misra in her above mentioned book, at page 95, had herself identified the year of birth of Gauharjan as 1870.

Secondly, Sharar's father Hakim Tafazzul Hussain, a scholar of Islamic religion and Arabic and Persian literature, joined the Court of the exiled Nawab of Oudh Wazid Ali Shah in 1862. Sharar lived with him at Mettiaburj, Calcutta during the period 1869 to 1879 and was contributing to the columns of the Lucknow Newspaper "Avadh Akhbar" as its Mettiaburj correspondent. If he saw Gauharjan Calcutta dancing at Mettiaburj even during this period and thereafter wrote "Forty years ago a celebrated Courtesan, Munsarimwali Gauhar went to Calcutta", then Munsarimwali Gauhar's birth dates further back. Therefore Munsarimwali Gauhar was a different artist than Gauharjan of Calcutta and had migrated to Calcutta from Lucknow, whereas Gauharjan had moved to Calcutta from Azamgarh and Banaras.

The Gauharjan, Sharar saw dancing at Mettiaburj during 1896, would have been born much before 1856, whereas Ms. Misra herself mentions the year of birth of Gauharjan as 1870 in the above mentioned book ( page 95). Also, Gauharjan of Calcutta migrated to that city from Jaunpur, not Lucknow.

Gauharjan of Jaipur, the second important name among other Gauhars, was born in 1894. Her father Ashfaq Hussain was an expert Sarangiya and her grandmother Gulabbai Mahuwawalee was a serving staff of the Gunijankhana (the council of master artists) of Jaipur. Gauharjan of Jaipur was inducted in the Gunijankhana during the rule of Maharaja Madho Singh (1880-1922) and rose to the position of in-charge of the women's section of the Gunijankhana. A famous singer-dancer of her day, her song "Gagari Mori Bharan Nahin Det" in Adana was a very popular and highly appreciated number. At times, other states like Alwar, Palanpur and Rampur too used to invite her to perform at their mehfils. Gauharjan of Jaipur was paid a salary of Rs. 300/- per month and a special allowance of Rs.20/- per month for teaching some of the female inmates of the Gunijankhana. As she advanced in years, Gauhar devoted herself to singing in praise of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti and Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. In recognition of her services to the State, the Home Minister of Jaipur State vide Resolution No.16 dated

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16th June, 1939, informed the Daroga of Gunijankhana that four Musicians namely, Karamat Khan, Riyazuddin Dagar, Gauharjan and her sister Qamarjan (another famous singer-dancer), employed in the Gunijankhana of Jaipur shall be allowed, as a special case, to get their full pay for the duration of their lives. Time and again, recording experts and institutions approached her for recordings, but she refused to oblige because she firmly believed that 3 to10 minutes of recordings could not do justice to her rendering. She also disliked the idea of her recorded voice being played for the uninitiated. This great artist died of Cancer in 1964 at the age of seventy.

Another Gauhar, the famous actress of the Parsi theatre, was first recorded by George Walter Dillnutt during February-March 1908, by the Gramophone Company Ltd. at Bombay. Her theatre career began as the leading lady of The Victoria Natak Mandali, she later worked for many other Parsi theatre companies too. Most of her

1. Gauhar Jan of bombay : Gramophone Concert Record
2. Gauhar Jan (Patiala) : His Mater's Voice Record
3,4. Miss Gohar of Bijapur : Columbia records

Miss Gohar of Junagad : Columbia Records

recorded songs are from her plays. She also recorded for other record labels like James-Operaphone. Her number "Kahun Kaise Sharam Ki Hai Bat" from the play "Zaheri-Samp" (record number GC-3-13889) was a great hit. Another famous number was "Pyarori Mera Umang Bhara Jobana" (James-Operaphone record number 714) from the play 'Murid-e-Shak' written by Aaga Mohammed Shah 'Hashra' Kashmiri, also known as the Indian Shakespeare.

Gauharjan of Patiala was another fine vocalist whose renderings reflected her sound base in Hindustani classical music. "Roke Mare" (record number GC-16-13532) and "Baat Chalat Nayee Chundari Rang Daree" (GC-16-13531) are her two available recordings.

Miss Gauhar of Bijapur or Gauharbai Karnataki was another accomplished singer whose many records are found under the Columbia label, these are recordings from a later period. She was a very popular singer and sang in more than one Indian language. Recordings of another Gauhar, (of Junagadh) are rare. She was an excellent singer and her records under record numbers GE 1599 (WEI-5477) and GE 1599 (WEI-5473) reflect her considerable musical talent.

Apart from her contemporaries, two teachers who made significant contributions in shaping Gauharjan's musical career and left an indelible impression on her style of singing, deserve special mention: Bhaiya Saheb Ganpat Rao and Ustad Mojjuddin Khan.

Bhaiya Saheb was a great Harmonium wizard. According to Susheela Misra (The Great Masters of Hindustani Music), this gifted artist was born to renowned singer Chandrabhaga Devi and Maharaja Jivaji Rao Scindia of Gwalior.( However, according to Raja Deba Prasade Garg of Mahishadal, Bhaiya Saheb's mother was a tawayef called Chandrabhaga, the father unquestionably Maharaja Daulat Rao Scindia.) He and his brother Balwant Rao inherited their mother's musical talents and became disciples of the famous Ustad Bande Ali Khan Beenkar. Ganpat Rao became famous all over the country as "The Harmonium wizard", and Balwant Rao as a fine Beenkar. After training with Ustad Bande Ali Khan of Gwalior and Ustad Sadiq Ali Khan of Lucknow, like a

musical mendicant Bhaiya Saheb traveled all over India to spend time with and to listen to the great musicians of his day and gradually evolved a style of his own.

Later on, Chandrabhaga Devi left Gwalior and shifted with her two sons to Bhavnagar where she was appointed a court musician.[15]

About Chandrabhaga Devi's musical talents Mr. Fox Strangway wrote: "The singing that appealed to me most was that of Chandrabhaga in Bhavnagar. She sang for an hour three songs. The most striking of them was a sort of Bhairavi, the other were in Yaman Kalyan and in Bagesri. She used gamaks sparingly and therefore effectively. A voice with good tone, as we understand tone, which is a rarity in India. But Chandrabhaga sang with full round notes. There was variety, quality in addition to the extraordinary flexibility of her voice. But the musicianship of her song was the most notable thing about it. She never seemed to come across the technical difficulties". Alongwith the gift of wizardry to play harmonium, Bhaiya Saheb also imbibed the romantic temperament and refined speech of Lucknow Thumri

developed by his Ustad Sadiq Ali Khan and popularized it by taking it to its pinnacle. He also raised the status of harmonium as a solo instrument. "He handled harmonium with so much eloquence that even Beenkars, Sitar-Nawajs and Sarangee-Nawajs were astonished. He drew the attention of musician how to express feelings through singing." [16]

In the words of Late Dr. Susheela Misra, as no harmonium wizard of Ganpat Rao's stature is available in our midst today, it is very difficult for us to imagine what exactly gave that " magical quality" to his art. It is said that one unique part of his technique was the complete mastery with which he could demonstrate 'Sadja-Chalan", which means shifting the basis "tonic" or "Sadja" from note to note, and pressing a baffling and ever changing kaleidoscope of ragas, after which the musician deftly lands back on the original pitch and raga. This is indeed a most challenging demonstration

Gauhar Jan : The Gramophone Concert records

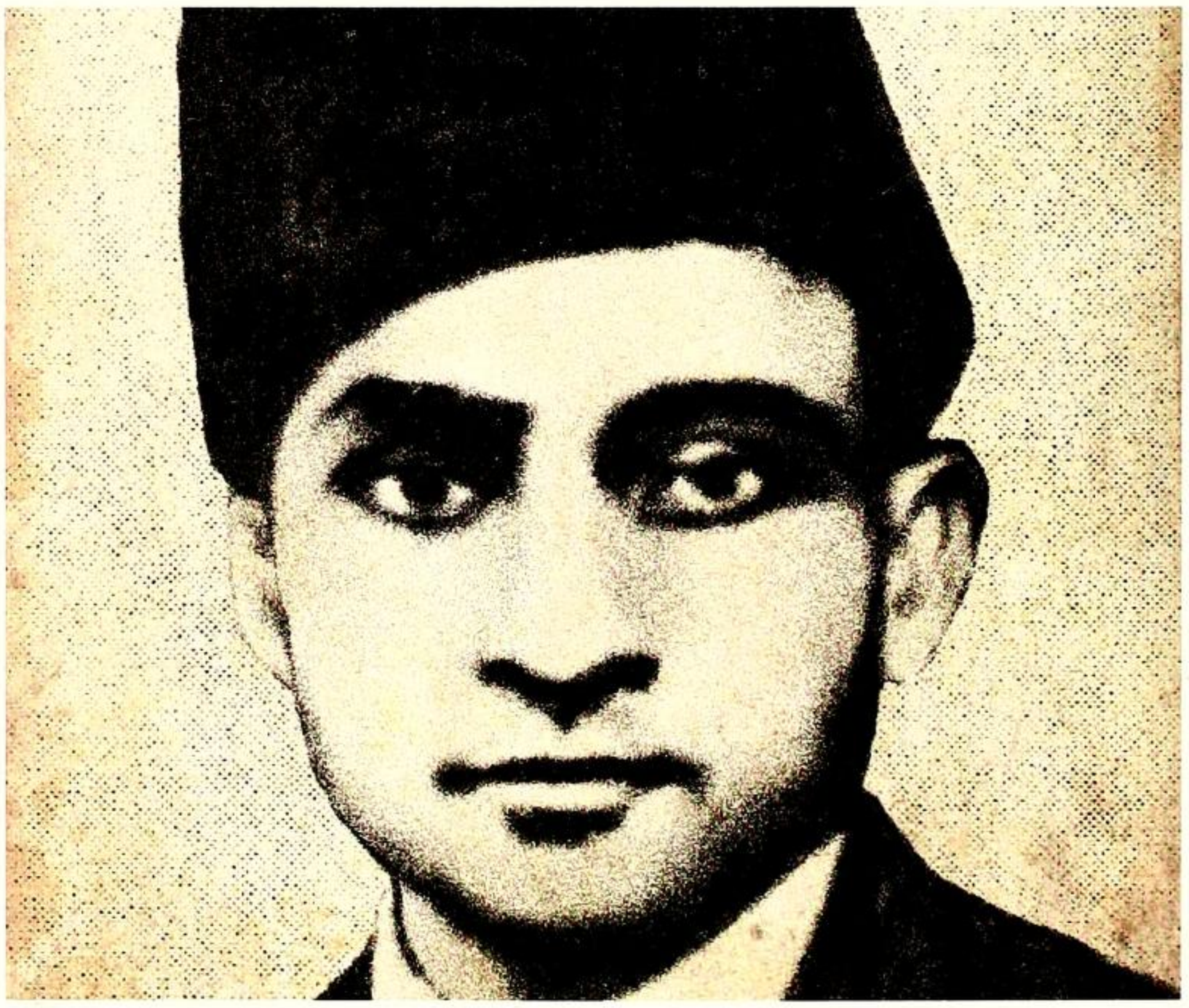
Bhaiya Sahab Ganpat Rao

of the musicians perfect mastery over Swara and tala. In fact, after taking off from the basic sadja, the artist can create a lot of excitement and curiosity among the initiated listeners by shifting the "tonic" and soaring off into the region of different ragas before safely landing back on the original pitch, sadja. Sometimes Bhaiya Ganpat Rao used to lead a harmonium trio or quartet. But whenever he soared off on his Sadja Chalan, the other would sit back and listen to his magical exposition spellbound. In fact, the harmonium is an instrument eminently suited for Sadja-Chalan. He would not only dazzle his listener with such feats but also pluck out their heartstrings through expressive Khatakas, Murkis, Laya-bant and cascades of tans on his harmonium. Trained in both classical and light classical music, he had moulded his voice in such a way that he would render both effectively, but thumri was his forte.

Gauharjan was lucky to have the blessings and guidance of this illustrious maestro. Through Bhaiya Saheb she was also exposed to the musical heritage of Chandrabhaga Devi, Ustad Sadiq Ali Khan and Ustad Bande Ali Khan Beenkar. After rendering the Thumri "Maika Piya Bin Kachhu Na Sohayee" (record no. GC-4-13257/Sohni), Gauharjan announced "My name is Gauharjan-Yeh Thumri Bhaiya Rao Saheb Ganpat". The record label prints that the composition of this record is that of " Bhaiya Ganpat Raw Sandia". In fact the term "Sandia" denotes "Scindia" the title of Bhaiya Saheb Ganpat Rao and his belonging to the Scindias.

Gauharjan also received guidance from Bhaiya Saheb's illustrious disciple Thumri Samrat Maujjuddin Khan. Maujjuddin Khan was the uncrowned king of Banaras Aang thumri. He was a disciple of Pandit Jagdeep Jee Mishra of Banaras. His style of Thumri singing influenced Gauharjan's gayaki to a great extent.

Ustad Maujjuddin Khan (1882-1926) came from a distinguished family of musicians from Nahan (Himachal Pradesh). His father Ustad Gulam Hussain Khan and Uncle Rahmat Hussain Khan, were



Ustad Maujjuddin Khan (1882-1926) (also spelt as Moujoudeen, Majoodin, Majuddin)

well-known vocalists and Sitariyas. His mother Zebunnissa was the daughter of the renowned Ustad Sulah Khan of Patiala Gharana. She had learnt music from her great father and was the first teacher of young Maujjuddin and his younger brother Rahimuddin Khan and sister Rahimunisha Bibi. When Maujjuddin Khan was four or five years old his family moved to Banaras and settled in a rented house at Mohalla Sheikh Saleem's Phatak and in due course shifted to Mohalla Chota Talla of Banaras.

Maujjuddin Khan's mentor and Guru Jagdeep Mishra convinced him that his voice was more suited to semi-classical forms like Thumri, Dadra, Chaiti and Hori. The budding artist was capable of quick assimilation of a piece of music by any artist with his own exquisite ideas and coming up with something striking and admirable. He also got to listen to the famous courtesans of Banaras. Bhaiya Saheb's stay at Banaras and his musical interface with the famous Bhagirathi Bai of Banaras helped Maujjuddin Khan to understand his wizardry on the harmonium and experiments with Thumri.

Maujjuddin Khan's entry into the professional circle through Rai Lalan and Rai Chagan, the leading connoisseurs and patrons of music of Banaras, was a happy accident. Lallanjee and Chagganjee used to organise mehfils in their garden where renowned musicians of Banaras would perform. Maujjuddin Khan was an upcoming artist and he was not invited to the mehfil but he wanted to listen to the musical greats and so with some of his friends, entered the garden uninvited. The mehfil was yet to begin and on his friends' request Maujjuddin was singing "Han Ree Nanadiya, Paan Khaye Mukh Lal Bhayo; Rang Chuuwey Jaise Kesar Ka" under a tree. Hearing his mellifluous voice Lallanjee was astounded, mesmerised, he followed

the voice and found a handsome young man singing the beautiful song. When the song was over, Lallanjee embraced Maujjuddin and respectfully invited him to perform at the mehfil. The brothers introduced Maujjuddin as an excellent upcoming singer in the mehfil of Seth Duleechand of Calcutta. This mehfil was attended by a galaxy of musicians and music lovers like Malkajan of Agra, Malka Chulbulee, Bhaiya Saheb Ganpat Rao, Ustad Bashir Khan of Jodhpur, Ustad Gafoor Khan of Punjab, Baboo Shyamlal Khatri of Calcutta, Sohnijee of Gaya, Ustad Mamman Khan of Delhi, Ustad Bahadur Khan of Patna and the great vocalist of Bengal Shri Girija Shankar Chakrobarty. The rest, as they say, is history.

Moujodeen Khan : His Master's Voice records

Records by Moujodin Khan

His songs "Aye Ree Pani Bhare Ree, Kaun Albelee Ki Nar Ho Jhamajham" and "Raja Kanwadiya Kholo, Rass Kee Bundein Padee" were reputed to attract heavy rainfall. The Ustad died Young but his unique style left a lasting impression on Thumri and more specifically, on Gauharjan.

Maujjuddin Khan can still be heard through a few of his rare recordings preserved in 78 R.P.M. records. He was recorded for the Nicole label during 1904-05 by Stephen Carl Porter and John Watson Hawd. "Tarsat Hai Mora Kahn" (Nicole record number C-134/ Behag) and "Sainya Bidesh Gaye" (Nicole record number C-226/Piloo, Thumri) are two such rare releases.

The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.'s recording expert William Sinkler Darby recorded the Ustad during the Calcutta recording session of 1904-05. As a result six recordings in 10" size records under the label Gramophone Concert Record were released: "Sanwariya Ne Jadoo

Records by Moujodin Khan

Dala" (record number G.C.-2-12930/Bhairabee); "Saiyan Bina Nahin Aawat Chain" (G.C.-2-12931/Qawali Khamach); "Dargan Logon Ko" (G.C.-2-12932/Multani); "Saiyan Bidesh Gayo Madho" (G.C.-2-12933/Piloo); "Piya Pardesh Mora Man Hara" (G.C.-2-12934/Qawali Khamach), and "Sughriya Pyari Se Naina Lago Re" (G.C.-2-12935/Dadra). All these songs were extremely popular and the records highly sought after by connoisseurs of music.

Ustad Maujjuddin Khan was recorded again by George Walter Dillnut during the Calcutta (Sealdah) recording session between 20th October and 16th December 1908 and twelve of his recordings were released: "Jhamajham Bhare Ree Kaun Albelee Ki Nar" (record number GC-8-12105/Gara); "Laage Kankariya Jin Maro" (G.C.-8-12119/Khayal Todi); "Dehi Daram More Pyare" (G.C.-8-12120/Darbari Todi); "Rasia Bedardi Main to Paniya Ko Gayee" (G.C.-8-12121/Bhairavi Thumri); "Rang Dekh

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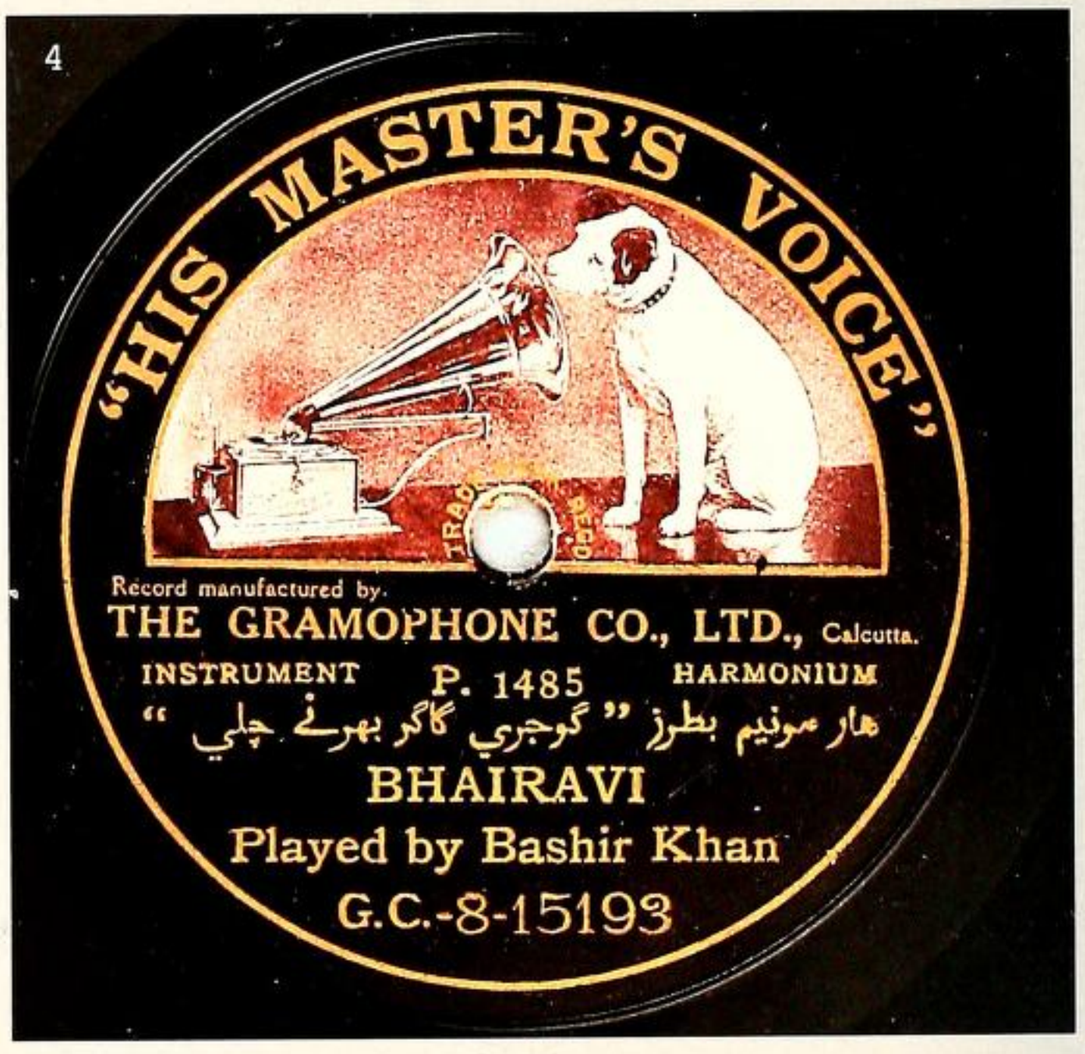



1. Record by Gauhar Jan
2,3,4 Records by Bashir Khan

Jiyara Lalchat" (G.C.-8-12122/Bhairavi); "Pi Ki Boli Na Bole Papihara" (G.C.-8-12123/Piloo); "Dag-Mag Hale Mori Naiya Re Kanhaiyajee" (G.C.8-12124/Piloo); "Murlee Ki Dhun Sune" (G.C.-8-12125/Kafi); "Fulawa Binat Dar Dar" (G.C.-8-12126/Sohni); "Sajan Ho Re Aangiya Ka, Bandh Jee Na Kholo" (G.C.-8-12127/Sarang); "Na Paigam Aata Hai Muddat Se Na Yaar Aaata Hai" (G.C.-8-12128/Gazal) and "Piraye Mori Ankhiyan Raja Hamse Na Bolo" (G.C.-8-12129/Dadra)

Some great accompanists like sarangee maestro Ustad Bechu Mishra, his renowned son Ustad Gauri Shankar Mishra, Ustad Mamman Khan Sarangiya (son of Ustad Sangi Khan and uncle as well as father-in-law of the great Sarangiya Ustad Bundu Khan) and Bashir Khan of Jodhpur also contributed to the growth and glory of Gauharjan of Calcutta. Born at Jodhpur, Rajasthan,

Bashir Khan : His master's voice

Miss Chanda Karwarkarin : Ramagraph disc record

Bashir Khan was a disciple of the great Bhaiya Saheb Ganpat Rao and elder son of Khwaza Ahmad Khan. As he did not possess a traditionally tuneful voice, Bashir Khan left Jodhpur and began to train in Harmonium with Bhaiya Saheb. Soon, he became an accompanist to Gauharjan. Some of Gauharjan's records acknowledge Bashir Khan as the Harmonium accompanist. Record No. GC-4-13250 ("Rasilee Matwaliyan Ne Jadu Dala" Bhairavi Titala, sung by Gauharjan) is one such record. The Gramophone Company Ltd. also released some independent recordings of Bashir Khan's Harmonium performance (record number GC-8-15192 of Multani Khayal; GC-8-15193 of Bhairavi; GC-8-15194 of Thumri Jhinjhauti and GC-8-15197 of Behag Khayal). Bashir Khan also served the Indore Darbar. He spent his last days in his home town Jodhpur.

Gauharjan of Calcutta had a galaxy of

Mustari Bai

other famous singers like Chandabai Karwarkarin alias Bablee Bai of Goa, Bai Kesarbai Kerkar, Mustaribai of Agra, Miss Achhan or Bai Achhan Bai of Bombay, Jankibai of Allahabad, Malkajan of Agra and Zohrabai of Agra for contemporaries.

Bableebai or Chandabai of Goa was the disciple of the Great Ustad Nathan Khan of Agra. As a classical singer, she was at least an equal of Gauharjan.[17] Also known as Miss Chanda Karwarkarin, she was a renowned and refined classical vocalist. She only recorded for the Ram-a-Phone label of T.S. Ramachunder and Brothers, Bombay. According to a catalogue released by the company, at least fifty-two Chandabai recordings (record numbers 224 to 275 of the Ram-a-Phone (Ramagraph) Records) were released by it. There remains some confusion among music lovers about Chandabai Karwarkarin and Bableebai of Goa being the same singer. Though in some of her records she did not announce her name, in record number 270 (Marathi Lawani); record number 271 (Marathi Lawani) and record number 224 ("Mai Kuvan Desh Kuvan Nagar jaye"/Mooltani), she announces her name "Bablee" right in the beginning.

Mustaribai of Agra, a highly accomplished singer, belonged to the class of singers who were rigorously trained in classical and light classical music and were patronised by Rajas and Nawabs. Their voices and music still evoke the bygone era of "fascinating and colourful oriental world of grandeur and refinement, of leisure and decadence, of passion and performing arts, and a world in which thousands of female dancers and singers played a vital role"[18]

Rai Chand Boral, son of the legendary Lal Chand Boral, recounts how The Lal Chand Boral Smriti Trust used to hold an annual musical conference at his residence in which top musicians participated. Once as Mustari Bai was concluding her recital with a Bhairavi Thumri, such was the impact of her singing that almost everyone in the hall was sobbing. Rabindranath Tagore heard the recital over the radio and rang up to enquire who the singer was. Later the organisers had to take Mustari to Tagore's residence as she was keen on receiving the poet's blessing's personally. [19]

Most of Mustari Bai's recordings are available under the HMV label. Some of

her songs like "Aah Mein Keon Ashar Nahin Aata" and "Preet Mein Tumari Preetam Pyare" are much admired by connoisseurs of music.

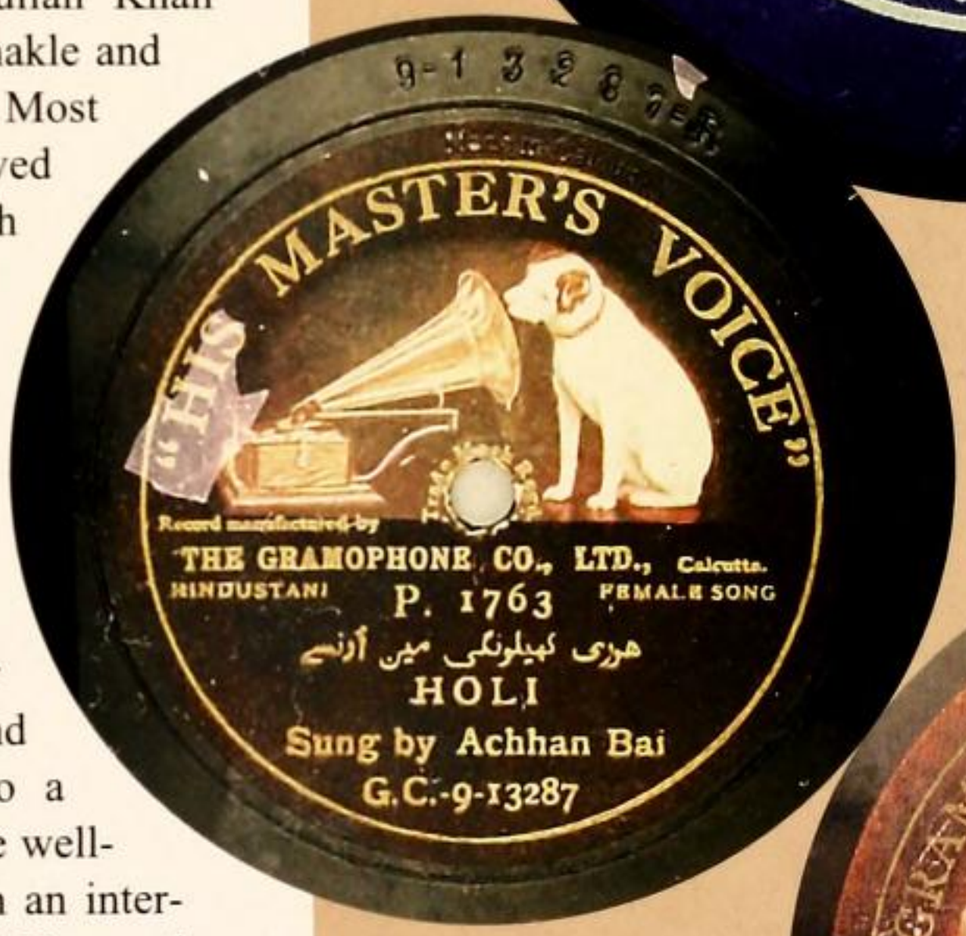
Prof. D.P. Mukherjee asserted that of all the artists, only Kesarbai was an equal of Gauharjan in musical talent. Bai Kesar Bai who was given the title of Surshree (Queen of Melody) by Kavi-Guru Rabindra Nath Tagore was the able inheritor of the Khayal Gayki of "Gaayan Maharshi" Ustad Alladiya Khan. She was born on 10 July, 1890 in a small village, Keri (Near Panaji) in Goa and learnt music from great Ustads like Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, Ustad Barkatullah Khan (Sitar), Pandit Bhaskarbua Bhakle and Pt. Rama Krishna Buva Waze. Most of her recordings are preserved under Broadcast label, which was introduced in India by 1928. It is an experience of its own kind to listen to the rarely luminous and sonorous voice of this great singer.

Achhan Bai was another accomplished singer and friend of Gauharjan. She was also a friend of Vidyadhari Devi, the well-known singer of Banaras. In an interview to Late Shri Amrit Lal Nagar, the writer of "Ye Kothewalian", Vidyadhari Devi was full of praise for Achhan Bai and her musical capabilities. She recalled that Gauharjan Calcutta, Chowdharain Nanhua-Bechhuwa of Lucknow, Acchan Bai and she were close friends; Achhanbai, according to Vidyadhari, could render all forms of Hindustani music beautifully: "Achhanbai Sab Chheezein Khubsuratee se Gaa leti theen".

Achhanbai's recordings (by the name of Miss Achhan or Achhanbai) are available in Ramagraph as well as in Gramophone labels. George Dillnutt made a number of recordings of Achhanbai between 1908 and 1910. Her Gramophone Concert Records "Barbas Garba Lagawe" (record number GC-8-13850) and "Gori Naina Na Maro Tarap Jayenge" (GC-3-13919/Kalingda), are still hot favourites. "Jigar Mein Tees Haye, Dil Mein Khattak" (record numbers 208/Gazal), "Jara Kahdo Sanwariya Se Aaya Kare" (216/Dadra) and "Rukhe Raushan....." (223/ Gazal) are her popular Ramagraph records.

Malkajan of Agra was another famous contemporary of Gauharjan. In fact, the

Bai Kesar Bai : Broadcast record



Achhanbai : HMV & Gramophone Concert Record

Malka Jan Agra

two also had some teachers in common. Malka initially trained with Ghulam Abbas Khan, the grandfather of Ustad Faiyaz Khan. Ghulam Abbas Khan (1825-1934) was the son of the renowned Ghagge Khuda Baksh, also known as Hussain Gawaiya of Agra Gharana. Later, Malkajan came in contact with Ghulam Abbas Khan's grandson Faiyaz Khan and became his admirer and disciple. They are said to have remained close to each other till their last days. Her other teachers were Bhaiya Saheb Ganpat Rao and Thumri Samrat Ustad Maujjuddin Khan of Banaras. That perhaps explains why Malkajan's Thumri rendering resembled Gauharjan's.

There are also stories of Ustad Maujjuddin Khan falling deeply in love with Malkajan, of the unrequited love that drove the Badshah of Thumri-Dadra to the bottle and Bais and hastened his end. Taking him to various famed Darbars and other mehfils in places like Mysore, Calcutta and Bombay, Bhaiya Ganpat Rao tried to divert Maujjuddin Khan from the path of self-destruction but in vain.[20]

Music aficionados relished telling tales about the Malka-Faiyaz-Maujjuddin trio. Malkajan had shifted to Calcutta, the then cultural hub of India, in search of better opportunities and recognition of her talents. This was the period when Ustad Maujjuddin Khan received wide appreciation for his renderings in the Darbar of Mysore and was a luminous star on the ascendent. During one of his visits to Calcutta, Ustad Maujjuddin Khan had consented to be the guest of Malkajan. Incidently, Ustad Faiyaz Khan also visited Calcutta during the same period. Both Ustads met at the residence of Malkajan, Faiyaz Khan Saheb expressed his desire to listen to Maujjuddin Khan. Maujjuddin

Malka Jan : Gramophone Concert Record

Khan graciously sang for the Ustad. Ustad Faiyaz Khan was full of praise for his melodious voice and style and his rendering of "Bhairavi". Another time Malkajan organised a mehfil in honour of the famous Sugganbai of Banaras at her residence in Calcutta. Ustad Maujjuddin Khan was also present at the mehfil. Sugganbai presented a Dadra and thereafter Malkajan, as the hostess, requested Ustad Maujjuddin Khan to sing. Maujjuddin Khan rendered the same Dadra in a much improved version. This irked Sugganbai, who took it as an affront and left the mehfil in a huff. Malkajan also found it unseemly and asked Maujjuddin Khan why he had thought it fit to present the same Dadra, Maujjuddin Khan sweetly clarified that he was so impressed with Sugganbai's singing that unknowingly, he started repeating it.

It is said that during a competition between Faiyaz Khan Saheb and Ustad Maujjuddin Khan at the residence of Malkajan at Calcutta, the Gayaki of Ustad Faiyaz Khan was adjudged superior. Maujjuddin Khan, who lacked formal training in "Gharanedar Gayaki" had to admit the superior quality of rendering of Ustad Faiyaz Khan Saheb. [21]

Malkajan of Agra was first recorded by William Conrad Gaisberg for The Gramophone and Typewriter Co. Ltd. during 1906-1907, at Calcutta. Consequently twenty of her recordings in the 10" size Gramophone Concert Records (record numbers G.C.-3-13526 to G.C.-3-13539, G.C.-3-13485 to G.C.-3-13489 and G.C.-3-13491) were released. The recording under record number GC-3-13526 was not released for technical reasons. Unlike Gauharjan, who sang in a host of languages, her Thumri, Hori, Dadra and

Ustad Faiyaz Khan

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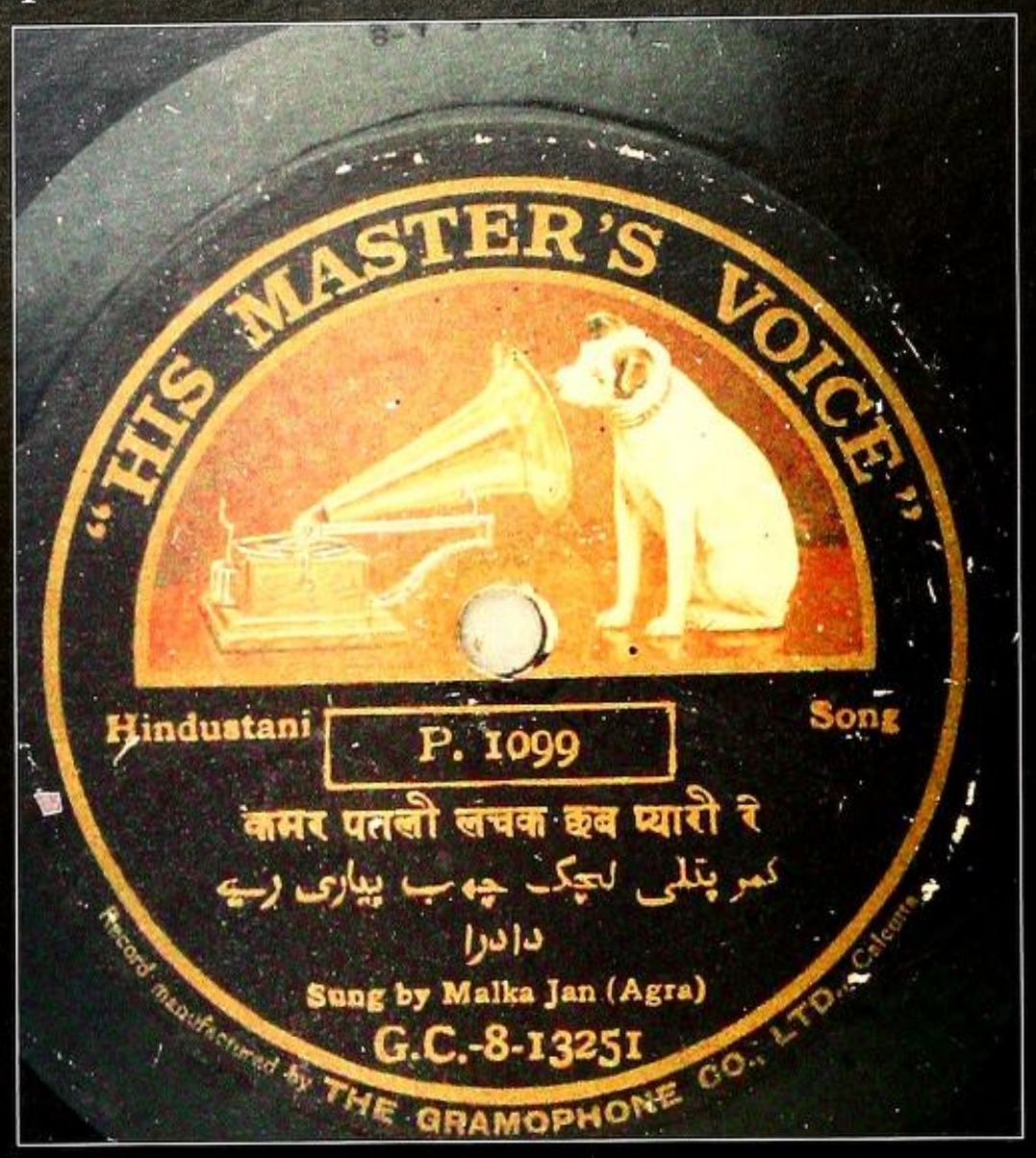


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1,3 : Malkajan Agra
2 : Malkajan Chaprevali
4: Malkajan Chulbuli

Qawali renderings were mostly in Hindustani. Some of her unforgettable numbers from this series are: "Bhor Kahin Meelan Bhail Ba" (record numbers G.C.-3-13487/Gandhari-Sitarkhani), "Babul Mora Naihar Chhuto Hi Jai" (G.C.-3-13488/Thumri), and "Kah Do Unse Ki Koi Yaad Kiya Karta Hai" (G.C.-3-13535/Piloo).

Between 1908 and 1910, The Gramophone Company Ltd. released a number of Malkajan recordings. In April 1908, Frederick William Gaisberg

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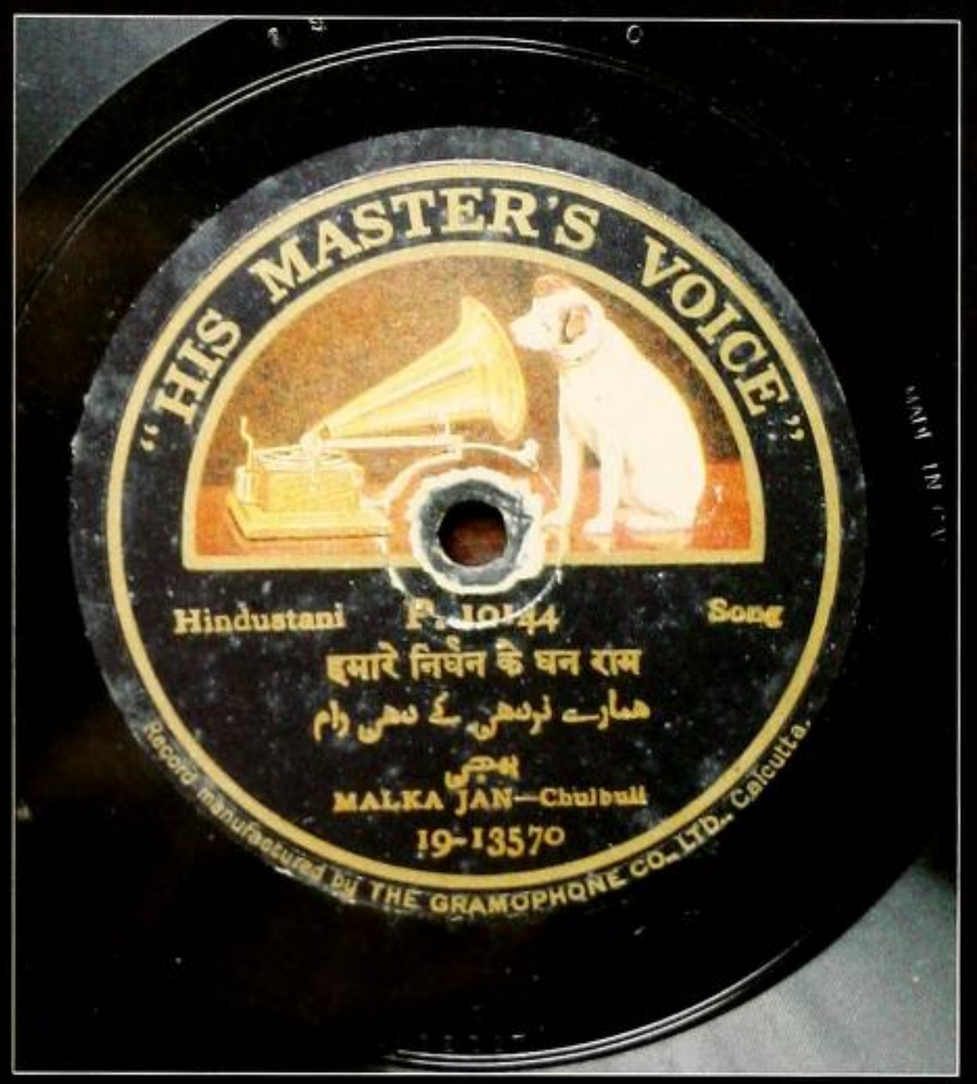
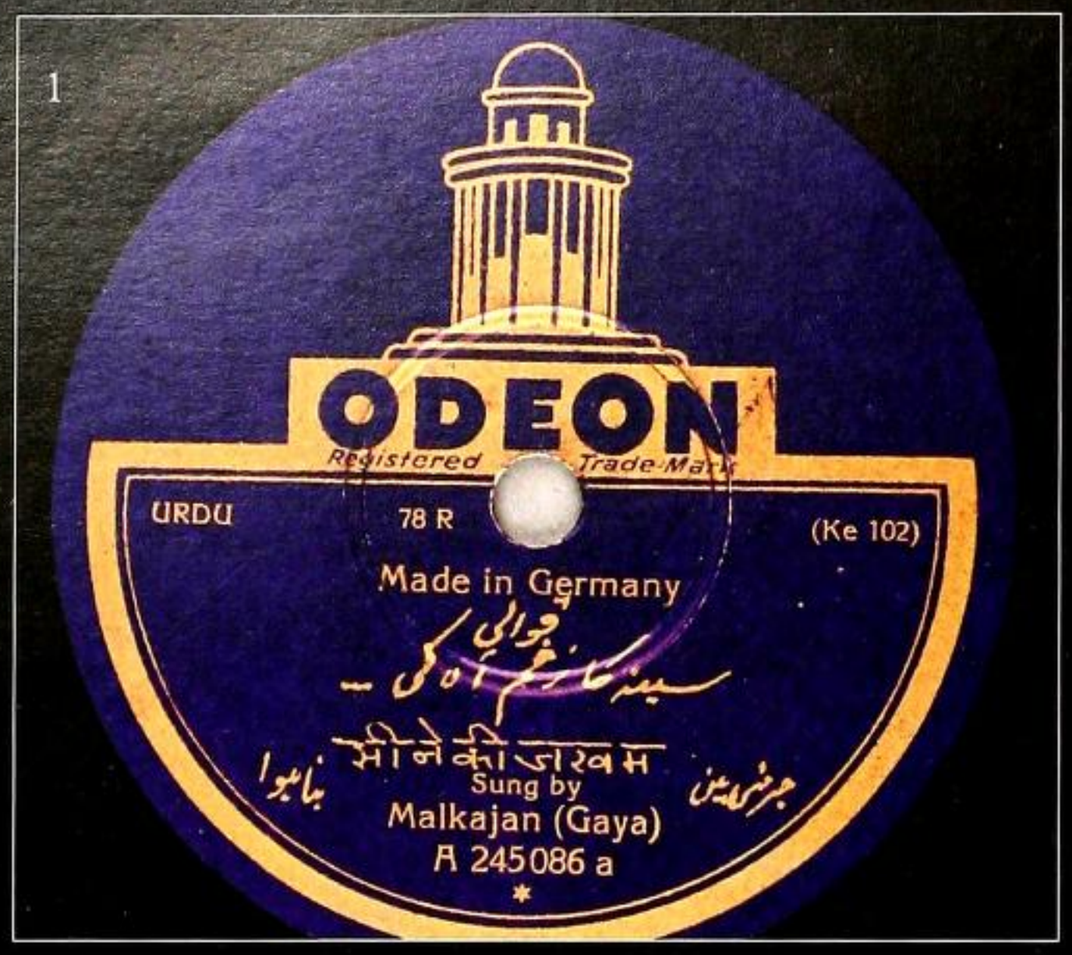



5 & 6 : Malkajan Chulbuli

recorded her twelve songs, out of which eleven were released under record numbers G.C.-4-13038 to G.C.-4-13047 and GC-4-13280. "Kahiyo Jasoda So Jae Kanha Ye Gagari Kahe Phodin" (record number G.C.-4-13042/ Dadra Barwa Kaharva) and "Suraj Mukh Na Jaiyon Re Mori Bindi Ka Rang Jar Jae" (G.C-4-13043/Sarang Kaharva) were two popular numbers from this series. In July 1908, The Gramophone Company's recording expert George Walter Dillnutt recorded nine to ten experimental recordings of Malkajan to test various new wax blanks, these were not released commercially. Responding to the soaring demand for her songs, The Gramophone Company Ltd. recorded Malkajan again at Calcutta between 2nd September and 1st October 1909. This time George Walter Dillnutt made thirty-seven recordings with her. These were released under Gramophone Concert and Zonophone record labels. Some well-known numbers from this series were: "Chhodo Chhodo Ji Mori Kalaiyan" (record number G.C.-8-13239/Dadra); "Kamar Patlee Lachak Chhabi Pyari Ree" (G.C.-8-13251/Dadra) and Zonophone Recored No. Number X-3-103168 (Dadra Mand). An year later, Malkajan was recorded yet again at Calcutta in October-November 1910 and about twenty-eight new records of Malkajan were released. She recorded a few "Marwari" songs this time. This time too, her records were released both under the "Gramophone Concert Records" label as well as the "Zonophone" label. Her songs "Biti Jat Barkha Rut" (record number G.C.-8-13885/Desh); "Papihara Peu Peu Kare" (G.C.-8-13896/Sawan Rupak) and "Raho Sautan Ke Sang" (G.C.-8-13898/Thumri Desh) were some of the better appreciated numbers from this series.

Besides Malkajan, Agra, and Gauharjan's mother Badi Malka, the other prominent Malkas were Malkajan Chapprewali, Malkajan (Chulbulee), Malkajan of 'Gaya', and Malka Pukhraj of Jammu.

Music texts also have references of a Malkabai of Banaras who was an excellent singer of Khayal, Tappa and Purab Aang Thumri and is said to have trained with Pandit Sarju Prasad Misra and his elder son Shri Vishwanath Prasad Misra of Banaras but hardly any of her recordings are available.

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1,3 Malka Jan of Gaya : Odeon records

2. Malika Pukhraj : His Master's Voice Record

4. Malka Jan Patna : Young India Record

Popular singer Malkajan Chapprewali, a cotemporary of Badi Malkajan and Gauharjan of Calcutta, belonged to the town of Chappra in Bihar. Beka Grand released her recordings under the Beka Grand label. Her one available record ("Aey Kaisey Bal Bikhre Hain"/record number 20375/cut in 1907) has been pressed in Berlin and dates back to 1907. The label of this record identifies her only as Malkajan, but at the end of the song, the artist announces her name as "Malkajan Chapprewalee".

Next among the Malkas is the famous Malkajan (Chulbulee). Many of her recordings were released under the record label "Ajano-Double-Face Record" manufactured by Grunbaum & Thomas, A.G. Berlin during 1913 (e.g. of Bhairabi (record number 90003) and Bhairabi Dadra (record number 90004)). Though the word 'Chulbulee' is not mentioned in the credits, the singer announces her full name before the commencement of the song in both these records. Chulbulee was also recorded by HMV. Record numbers HMV 19-13569 (Tum bin nath sune ko meri) and HMV 19-13570 (Hamare nirdhan ke dhan Ram) are two available records under the lable. These two records mention har name as Malkajan Chulbulee.

Malkajan of Gaya, another singer with a melodious voice and a sound base in

Hindustani classical music, hailed from Gaya, Bihar. At the turn of the twentieth century, Gaya had a long tradition of music and was home to several famous musicians. "Siney Ke Jakham" (record number A-245086a); "Bangwan Apana Ho" (A-245086b) and "Laagi Mori Bindiya" (A-245847b/Dadra) released under the Odeon label showcase the musical talent of this talented singer.

Last but not least among the Malkas, Malka Pukhraj needs no introduction among music connoisseurs of the Indian sub-continent. Her rendering of poet Hafeez Jullandhari's "Abhi to Main Jawan Hun" is an all time favourite.

A few records of a Malkajan under the Young India label (of "The National Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co. Ltd.", 110 Meadows Street, Fort, Bombay, which was established by Dule Rai A. Pandya and his relatives during 1935) have also come to notice. One such record (number D.A. 11276) contains the song "Mehbub-e-Khuda" a composition of Feroz Jullandhari and had been recorded after 1935. The voice of this Malkajan is totally different from the voices of the other Malkajans. Some collectors assign this record to a Malkajan, who belonged to Patna, Bihar. But the word "Patna" is neither written on the record nor announced.

Zohrabai of Agra was another prominent contemporary of Gauharjan of Calcutta. A classical vocalist of a high order (considered a superior singer than both Gauharjan of Calcutta and Malkajan of Agra by some), Zohrabai learnt music from Ustad Ahmed Khan. Ahmed Khan was a well-known Sarangee player who learnt Dhruvapada and Dhamar from Ustad Ghulam Abbas Khan, the great stalwart of Agra Gharana and Khayal from Ustad Mehboob Khan "Daras-Piya". Zohrabai also learnt music from Ustad Kallan Khan (also known as Ustad Kale Khan of Mathura, who married Qadri Begum, a daughter of Ghulam Abbas Khan) and Ustad Mehboob Khan "Daras-Piya" of Atrauli. She emerged as a versatile and highly acclaimed vocalist, albeit with a limited appeal, because only those who really understood music could appreciate that style. She was in fact the thinking musician's singer- an aberration in the world of the bais.[22]

In the words of Music scholar Keshav Rao Bhole: "Aalapchari of Zohrabai was undoubtedly beautiful. This can be judged through her gramophone records. Even today her music gives an immense pleasure to the listeners. Records do testify that she did not have natural melodious voice, however she took lot of efforts and learnt music and renowned singers of that era also appreciated her music. Rama Krishna Boa Vaze visited her in Agra and stayed in her house as guest for several days. Her father used to give her Talim, everyday and Vazeboa used to listen to them singing. Her father was a renowned Sarangi player and many nuances of Sarangi could be traced in her rendering.

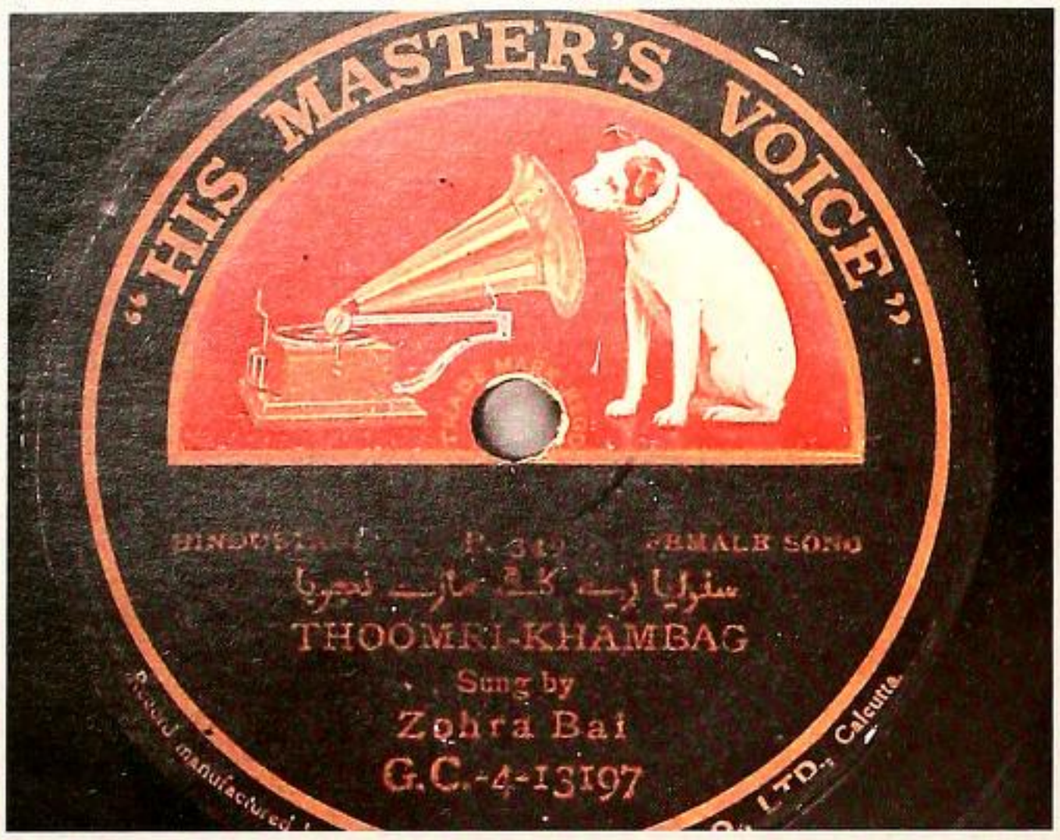
Malka Jan Patna :
Young India Record

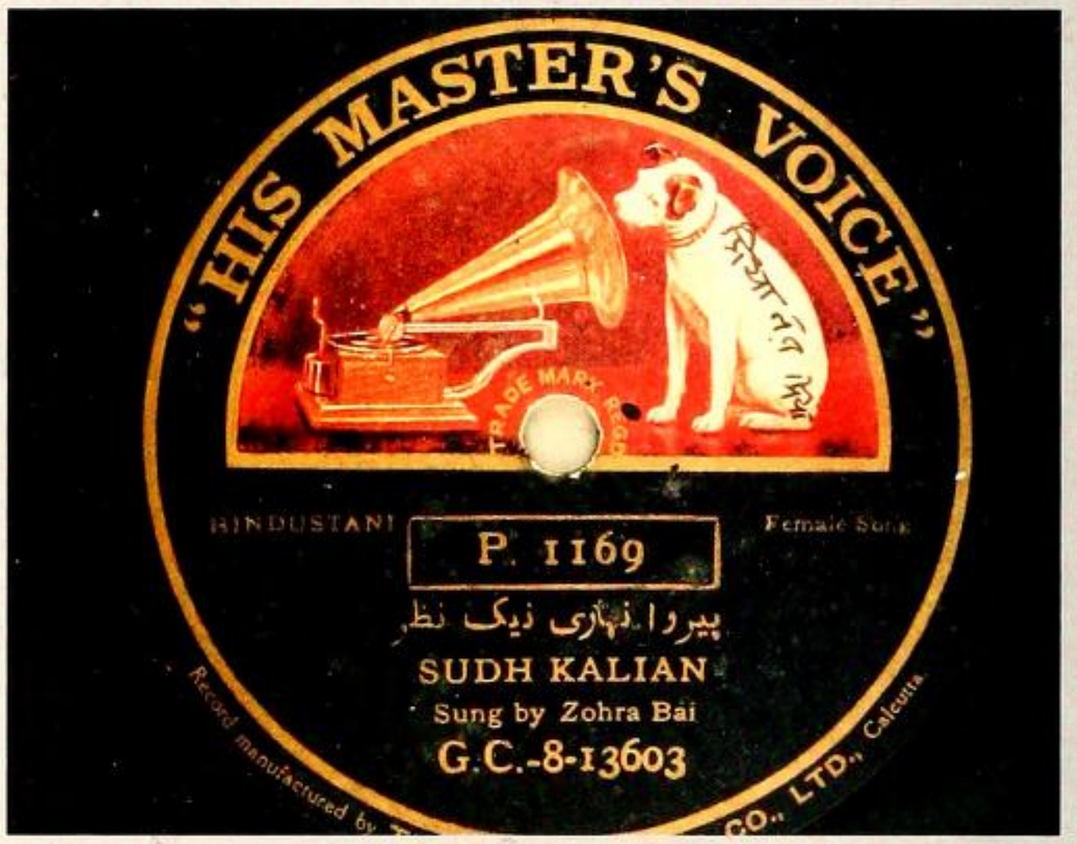
Vazeboa was very much pleased with her melodious voice. She has cut many gramophone records and the bilambit was her speciality. I used to listen to these records again and again and each time could feel something unusual. Whenever Vazeboa visited me, he would listen to her "Kajarare" record in raga "Gaud Sarang" and would remark what a "Shuddha Madhyam" Keshav Rao. I am trying very hard but cannot sing as she has, and hence I listen to this record again and again. One day he told me some interesting incident, which occurred during his stay at her house - "During my stay, Ghulam Abbas Khan and Nathan Khan came to her house. Everyday, we used to listen to her. She also sang many ragas again and again. One day her father requested them to sing. Since they were very senior and renowned singers, he thought that his daughter would also learn from them. They just smiled and kept quiet but did not sing. I was surprised, as I had thought that they would definitely sing for this little girl Zohra. Her father repeatedly requested and finally asked whether his daughter does not deserve to listen to them. They said "She is so melodious and tuneful that we are afraid that we would be quite out of tune if we sing." Her father thought that they are making fun and he requested again and again. Finally they took the Oath of Allah (Allah Kasam) and all of us were stunned."

He continues,"I have also learnt quite a lot from Zohrabai. She has sung several traditional ragas, Taranas, Thumri, Dadra, Keherwa and Bandishes on gramophone records. Her style of singing has been imitated by many including Khan Saheb Abdul Karim Khan and is being followed till today. In other words, unlike old Rishi - Munis (Sages), she has created her own tradition/school of singing. Rendering of Asthayi, Antara and stretching and twisting of musical notes was also later followed by Bhaskarboa Bakhle in his singing. I have also learnt from her laykari, Taans and the style of arriving at Sama. In 1918AD, while listening to Abdulla Khan (Elder brother of Vilayat Hussain Khan) and Bhaskarboa, I could listen to the influence of Zohrabai's Laykari style on the rendering of these two great singers."[23]

Bhole unabashedly credits Zohra with pioneering the condensing of the details of a raga for the nascent medium of gramophone record: "Zohrabai of Agra chose best bandishes of various ragas, recorded prolifically and proved the popularity of these among the music loving and record buying public. Her gayaki as could be heard in these records is undoubtedly great and graceful. Her records in ragas Basant, Marwa, Puriya Dhanshree, Jogiya, Gaud Sarang, Todi, Multani, Kedar, Khamaj, Bhupali, Jaunpuri and many others prove this amply. She was equally great in her records of Thumri, Dadra and Gazal. After singing Asthayi and Anatara gracefully, she weaves the words/text of cheeze in Aalap, Murki and Khatka, improvising the raga. She then slowly begins to sing layakari taans and in fast tempo presents faster and faster taans and suddenly concludes her recital by announcing her name - "Zohrabai Agrewali" in English and in the same tempo. [In some records she tells her complete address too]. This formula became so popular that it was religiously followed by several gramophone singers almost till the end of 78 R.P.M. era. This is just a small-condensed version of three-hour proper concert of Hindustani Classical music where an elaborate and improvised singing of a raga is presented. Several instrumentalists followed this formula too and no one dared to change it or divert from it. Those who tried to evolve some other formula have failed miserably and their records did not become popular and bestsellers. Her formula is based on firm footing that has taken into account factors like - taste of the audience, their psychology and attitudes towards this medium of "Canned Music". In this respect, she is considered to be a trendsetter. This could be seen and heard in the 78's of Bade Gulam Ali Khan and

❮Zohrabai of Agra






Zohra Bai : HMV Records

Moghubai Kurdikar. In about 1927, Narayanrao Vyas recorded two sides - "Yeri Mohe Jane Na De" and "Avinashi Ha Atma Jagati". He had studied Zohrabai's formula by listening to her records carefully and this is the reason of the nationwide popularity of his records."[24]

Zohrabai, Agra was the most famous singer among the many other Zohras like Zohra Ambalewali, Zohrajan, Zohra Begum of Calcutta and Miss Zohra (Kali Masjidwali) of Delhi.

It is said that there was a Zohrabai Patnewali who was a reputed courtesan, who lived at Mohalla Machcharhatta in Patna City. A slight controversy exists whether Zohrabai Patnewali and Zohrabai, Agra were the same artist or two different artists. In my opinion Zohrabai Patnewali and Zohrabai, Agra were the same person. I quote from Mr. Michael S. Kinnear's "Zohrabai Agrewali - recording for the 'Gramophone' and discography", published in the Record News, SIRC (TRN2001): "On the 5th February 1908, an agreement was signed between The Gramophone Company Ltd., 7-Esplanade East, Calcutta and Zohrabai, formerly living in Agra, but now in Patna city, At Mohalla "Machharhatta, Thana Khowaja Katan."

The agreement describes Zohrabai as the daughter of Hussaini (Also formerly of Agra). Under the terms of the agreement, Zohrabai was contracted for a period of three years, with an annual salary of Rs.2500/-, for which she was required to sing - for the "Gramophone" - the best of her songs such as Gazals, Thumris,

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This patented copyright record may be publicly performed without licence
"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"
Urdu Dadra
N. 16454
हाये-मोरी लागी उन्हीं से नजरया-दादरा
ہائے موری لاگی اُنہیں سے نجریا
دادرا
Zohra Begum (Calcutta)
OMC. 15203
Record manufactured by THE GRAMOPHONE CO., LTD., Dum Dum

4

Dadras etc. in different varieties, for three years - "in good and sweet tune" of twenty five (25) records or songs every year.

Zohrabai was to be paid her salary at the time of recording or within six months of the recordings being completed. Zohrabai had also agreed to never to give her voice to any other talking machine company during the duration of the agreement.

The Gramophone Company Limited, for their part were to provide, the recording expert and machines necessary to make the recordings, and also to provide for the expenses of travel and lodging - with "Foodings" for herself and her companions, if the recordings were to be made at any place outside Patna". This clearly indicates that it was the Zohrabai of Agra who later on migrated to Patna and settled at Mohalla Machcharhatta of Patna city. The list of recordings made by The Gramophone Company Ltd. (published in the book, "The Gramophone Company's Indian Recordings (1908-1910)" by Michael S. Kinnear, Bajakhana, Heidelberg, Australia) too mentions Zohrabai as "Miss Zohra Bai (Zohra Bai - Agrewale) Patna" at pages 217 and 311 of the book. In the "Introduction" part of this book Kinnear writes: "The information on the sound recording industry in India has been compiled from a variety of sources including original documents and communications between The Gramophone Company Ltd., in London and their Branch Office in Calcutta, which have survived in EMI Archives, London". This conclusively proves the point that it was Zohrabai of Agra who was also referred as Zohrabai of Patna due to her migration to Patna.

1. Zohra Bai : HMV Record
2-3 Zohra Jan: HMV Records
4. Zohra Begam (Calcutta) :HMV Record.

"AN ALL STAR RECORD"
This patented copyright record must not be publicly performed without licence.
Maxitone
N. SONG
N.R. 688
आई जाडो में गुईयां बहार है
آئی جاڑوں میں گوئیاں بہار ہے
Miss ZOHRA (Kali Masjidwali)
(DELHI)
OMF. 5402
The Maxitone Record Company, Ltd., Cawnpore
"AN ALL STAR RECORD"
This patented copyright record must not be publicly performed without licence.
Maxitone
N. SONG
N.R. 688
काहे को मारे नैना बान
کاہے کو مارے نیناں بان
Miss ZOHRA (Kali Masjidwali)
(DELHI)
OMF. 5403
The Maxitone Record Company, Ltd., Cawnpore

Miss Zohra (Kali Masjidwali) : Maxitone Record

Patnawalee Zohra had a grand Kotha (salon) at Machcharhatta. She had great regard for the esteemed poet and writer "Hazrat Shah Akbar Danapuri" and under his guidance, penned a number of Gazals. In one of her compositions, she says : -

Pee Ke Ham Tum Jo Chale Jhumate May Khane Se,
Jhuk Ke Kutch Baat Kahi Shishe Ne Paymane Se.
Hamne Dekhi Hai Kisee Shokh Ki Mayago Aankhen,
Milti Julti Hain, Chhalakte Huye Paymane Se.
*(As you and I walked out of the wine house, The jug said to the gohlet-I have seen the drunk eyes of someone, they resemble a brimming glaes.)*

Maharaja of Darbhanga Rameshwar Singh was a contemporary and admirer of Zohra. The Maharaja loved her Thumries and it is said that he even financed the construction of a beautiful structure over her grave. This tomb of Zohrabai, who died in 1911, at Patna, is located in the Machcharhatta lane of Patna city, behind the akhada and opposite the old Mosque of Aurangjeb era.

Zohrabai was first recorded by The Gramophone Company Ltd. in April 1908, at Calcutta. Frederick William Gaisberg recorded twenty-five songs of hers, out of which twenty-two were commercially released under the Gramophone Concert Record label (record numbers G.C-4-13181 to G.C.-4-13199 and GC-4-13242 to G.C.-4-13247). Some famous numbers from this series are: "Nanadiya Jiyara Na Mane Mora" (G.C.-4-13183/Kalingra/Gazal), "Sanvariya Re Kahe Mari Nazariya" (G.C.-4-13197/Thumri Khammach) and "Kahe Laagi Saiyan Bhailan Jogiya Ho Rama" (G.C.-4-13246/Chaiti Dadra).

Zohrabai was recorded again on 21st and 22nd November 1909 by George Walter Dillnutt at Lucknow. This time she made twenty-six recordings, (numbers G.C.-8-13584 to G.C.-8-13608 & G.C.-8-13643. Some popular numbers from this series are: " Koyaliya Kook Sunawe" (record number G.C-8-13596/ Zila); "Teri Kaatil Nigahon Ne Mara" (G.C.-8-13598/Sarang); "Piyarwa Teri Nek Najar" (G.C.-8-13603/Suddha Kalyan); "Piya

Ke Milan Ko Aas Ree Sakhee" (G.C.-8-13587/Jogiya) and " Allah Jane Jane" ( G.C.-8-13585/Toddi).

The next year too, Zohrabai was recorded at Delhi by George Dillnutt on 21st November 1910. This recording session resulted in twenty-seven recordings, one record of Punjabi singer Miran Bakhsh (G.C-9-12197) was wrongly issued under Zohrabai's name. (28) The highlights of this session are: "Piya Bin Kachhu Na Suhai" (record number G.C.-8-13988/ Bhairavi); "Chanchal Tore Nainan" (G.C.-9-13001/Zila) and "Nahin Mane Shyam Tero" (G.C.-8-13994/Desh).

Though Zohrabai, Aagrewali died in 1911, the appeal of her songs lives on. The Gramophone Company Ltd. kept her music and memory alive by releasing her various songs, time and again.

Zohrabai Ambalewali was a wellknown singer who also sang for some Hindi Films. Her songs from the film "Ratan" (HMV record number N-26494), "Ankhiyan Mila Ke" and "Rumjhum Barse Badarwa" still enthral music lovers. "Andheriya Ho Raat Sajjan" and "Chotte Se Balma More Aangan Mein" (HMV record number N6495) presents another Zohra i.e. Zohrajan.

Zohra Begam of Calcutta's Dadra, "Hai Mori Laagi Unhee Se Najariya" and Ghazal, "Janata Hun Mujhe Maalum Hai Rona Hoga" (record number N-16454) are lone samples of this singer's mastery over the lighter forms of Hindustani music. Little is known about her otherwise.

Similarly, a few records of Zohra of Delhi (Kalimasjidwali) have also been noticed. None of the other Zohras were anywhere near Zohrabai of Agra in fame or craftsmanship. The book "Vaarvadhu Vivechan" also refers to one Zohrabai of Kapoorthala and elsewhere there are stray references to a Zohrabai of Lucknow and a Zohrabai of Patna too.

Gauharjan of Calcutta, Malkajan of Agra, Zohrabai of Agra and a host of their likes, contributed immensely to the propagation and growth of mainly the light classical genre of Hindustani classical music and its popularity. Their records brought these musical forms within easy reach of the masses. Today, these records, besides being the living testimonies of the relentless efforts made by these great artists, are rare jewels of the musical treasure of this sub-continent.

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"
Urdu Ghazal
N. 16454
जानता हुं मुझे, मालुम है, रोना होगा ग़ज़ल
جانتا ھوں مجھے معلوم ہے رونا ھوگا
غزل
Zohra Begum (Calcutta)
Composer :- Mirza Maher
OMC. 15202
Record manufactured by THE GRAMOPHONE CO. LTD. Dum Dum.

Zohra Begum of Calcutta : "His Master's Voice"

Native Nautch Girls of Delhi, 1864

Courtesy: "Samuel Bourne, 1864. Collection title: "India - Groups. 1874."

COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE TYPE "AT," 1899

# 4 HUSNAS, WAZIRS AND AMIRS

Browsing through old gramophone records, one often comes across a number of records with similar or identical named artists. Though quite a large number of them get easily identified with a particular artist, yet a few present not only different voices but also mention different places of origin of same-named artists. In fact they pose serious challenges of identification, segregation and grouping. "Gauhars, Malkas and Zohras" is one such group and "Husnas, Wazirs and Amirs", another.

Husnajan or Husna Bai of Benaras was an excellent khayal, tappa and thumri singer. Born in the Annai Village of Pandrah Pargana of Benaras, she learnt music from Thakur Prasad Mishra and reputed saranginawaz Shambhunath Misra. She also learnt tappa from the renowned Chhote Ramdass Ji of Benaras.

An embodiment of courtesy and refinement, Husnajan was one of the most reputed and respected bais of her day. Her imperious stance won her the nickname 'sarkar' (Her Highness) amongst her circle of admirers. An excellent judge of human behaviour, she would quickly judge a person's class and mould her behaviour accordingly. And thereby hangs a tale- a zamindar arrived at her 'kotha' to listen to her sing, climbing the stairs to her kotha, his footsteps made a loud thumping noise. Husnajan refused to sing for the zamindar saying how could someone who did not know how to negotiate a staircase, appreciate the fine nuances of khayal and thumri?

Husna Bai : Banaras

Blessed with an intellectual bent of mind, Husna often corresponded with the leading litterateur of Benaras, Bhartendu Harish Chandra for his opinion and guidance in literary matters. An anthology of her compositions of ektala, khemata, thumari and kajari have been published under the title "Madhu Tarang". Literary historian and art afficionado Rai Krishna Das who received some rare photographs of Bhartendu from Husna, recalled regretfully that while he was growing up Saraswati Bai and Husna Bai were the two leading singers of Benaras, by the time he developed a good understanding of music, Husnajan was already 50 years old.

Music connoisseur Vachaspati Pathak recounts an anecdote: "Once Husna was singing in a mehfil organised by a prominent zamindar of Bengal who had settled at Benaras. So enchanting was Husna's rendition that the zamindar who was an accomplished tabla player, could not resist the temptation of accompanying her on tabla. To the amazement

Husna Bai : Banaras

and admiration of listeners, the duo performed all night and made this event a memorable one".

An integral element of the cultural life of contemporary Kashi, Husnabai used to sing at the mehfil of the Maharaja of Kashi on the eve of Holi and Dashara. She was also a regular at the 'Budhwa Mangal' festival of Benaras. Music connoisseurs held Husnajan's performance in high esteem; once, in a mehfil she was pitted in a competition with Gauharjan of Calcutta, though both performed their best, it was felt that Husna had an upper hand due to her superior training in Khayal rendering. She was known to be particular to the point of being finicky about the quality of sound at her performance. It is said that during a programme held in summer, keeping in mind the performers' comfort, the organizers positioned an electric fan near the stage. Despite the intense heat, Husnajan requested them to switch-off the fan as she found noise disturbing.

In 'Vaarvadhu Vivechan' (Sahitya Sadan, Amritsar, 1929), Goswami Sudhadhar Deo Sharma writes about a meeting held in Madras in 1892 by certain social reformers and reformation societies to start an agitation against prostitution and its eradication. Many avowed not to watch nautch. Newspapers like 'The Indian Social Reformer' and 'The Lahore Purity Servant' also appreciated and supported the cause of the reformist groups. He refers to a "Memorandum" submitted in 1893 to the then Governor of Madras and the Governor General of India by these reformist groups, which requested the authorities to extend government support to eradicate prostitution which was a social evil. They were also requested not to participate in any programme where performances by courtesans were a part of entertainment. However, the Viceroy's office (vide letter dated the 23rd September 1893, Shimla) did not support their cause as it found nothing objectionable in such performances. Aggrieved with the apathetic attitude of the government, certain enthusiasts decided to target centers of prostitution directly. Their action created a furor. In Lahore, the Municipality even went to the extent of shifting prostitutes from Anarkali Bazaar to some other place.

He further writes that during the Non Co-operation Movement Mahatma Gandhi (while passing through Kashi and Nainital) appealed to the women to break free from the shackles of prostitution and join the national mainstream. Inspired by this appeal many prostitutes joined the charkha movement. In Amritsar followers of

Gandhi formed a committee of reformers which started picketing in front of houses of prostitution. As a result many prostitutes left Amritsar.

In Kashi, the courtesans came together under the aegis of the Tawaif Sabha, Kashi (Courtesan's Federation of Kashi), the twin purposes of this Sabha were: to espouse the cause of reformation, and to support the national movement for independence. Husnabai was unanimously elected the President. 'Vaarvadhu Vivechan' gave the full text of her inspiring presidential speech at the inauguration of the Sabha. Reciting the electrifying couplet:

*Mandir main hai chand chamakta, masjid main hai murli ki taan*
*Makka ho chahe Vindravan, hote aapas main qurbaan*
*(The moon shines in the temple the flute of Krishna sings in the mosque. Macca and Vrindavan are ready to sacrifice them selves for each other.)*

She appealed to her fellow members to draw inspiration from Joan of Arc and the women of Chittore who preferred to burn alive than to live a life of slavery and dishonour. She reminded them that if they really wanted freedom they must be prepared to wear iron shackles instead of ornaments of gold. She took a vow to boycott foreign goods and appealed to the courtesan community to commence their renditions with singing of nationalistic and patriotic songs. She advised the members of the Sabha to collect such songs from Vidyadharibai and graciously acknowledged the help Vidyadharibai, another famous singer of Benaras, extended to her to establish the 'Tawaif Sabha'.

Husnajan was nothing if not iron-willed, she struggled and led her community towards change and fought for their betterment under very unfavourable social circumstances. Her advice to the courtesans to commence a performance with a patriotic song was a flash of sheer tactical genius: it followed the prevailing sentiment of the

vidyadharibai : Banaras

day and also allowed these women, shackled by centuries of prejudice and social injustice, to protect the only means of their livelihood. She also worked untiringly to win for music and musicians due respect and recognition in society.

In her later interviews Vidyadharibai often mentioned that it was under the influence of Husnabai that she converted to the cause of nationalism and began to start her performances by singing a patriotic song. A favourite opening song of Vidyadharibai's was:

Husna Bai : Gramophone Concert Record

"Bharat- Na Rah Sakega Hargiz Ghulamkhana;
Azad Hoga-Hoga Aaya Hai, Woh Zamana.
Parwah Ab Kise Hai Iss Jail Aur Daman Ki;
Ek Khel Ho Raha Hai, Phansi Pe Jhul Jana.
Bharat Watan Hamara Bharat Ke Ham Hain Bachche;
Mata Ke Waste Hai, Manjoor Sar Kattana".

*(India shall not remain a land of slaves. It will be free, the time has come, who cares if one lives or dies. Hanging has become child's play. India is our motherland, we are its children. For the mother we could get our heads cut off.)*

Not many recordings of Husnajan or Husnabai of Benaras are available. William Conrad Gaisberg, recorded Husnajan during the recording session of 1906-1907 on behalf of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. In his memoir "The Romance of Recording" Gaisberg mentions his visit to Benaras but there is no reference to recordings made here. In fact, Husnajan was recorded at Lucknow where the recording party of the Gramophone Company stayed for a long time. Of the sixteen recordings made, twelve recordings were released in 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' (G.C.-3-13096 to GC-3-13107) label and four in 12" size 'Gramophone Monarch Record'(013059 to 013062) label.

Miss Hassuna,Gazipur:
Disque Pathe

Husna favoured songs set in Bhairavi and Dadra. Two of her famous songs are "Nahin Mane Re Julmi Yauwanwaa Rama" (record number GC-3-13103 of chaiti (Jangla Piloo) and "Dekho Kannhiya Ne Rang Gholee Re" (GC-3-13104 of Holi Khambaj). At the end of these songs, Husnajan announces her name as "Husna Benaras" or "Benaras Husna". Among other recordings, "Gujariya Gagar Bharne Chali" (record numbers GC-3-13096 of Thumri Bhairavi); "Be-Dard Naina Lagaye Chala Jaye" (GC-3-13101 of Eman-Dadra); "Sowat Nindiya Jagaye Ho Rama" (GC-3-13105 of Chaiti-Ashawari) and "More Raja Mose Karo Na Batiyan" (Gramophone Monarch record number 13061 of Dadra) were popular numbers too. These songs transport the listener to a bygone era when this queen of melodies reigned over the hearts of music lovers of this sub-continent.

Miss Hassuna,Gazipur:
Disque Pathe

Husnajan lived at Raja Darwaja, Benaras and also breathed her last there in 1935. She had a Hindu lover who was nicknamed "Husnawale Dass". After his death Husna got a dharmshala constructed in his memory. It is known today as "Shri Krishna Dharamshala". She also commissioned the construction of a Radha-Krishna temple in the town.

Husnajan's fame spawned a horde of copycat singers, several bais adopted her name as well as her style. There are four Pathe recordings of two artists by the name of Husna: printed names of these two artists are "MISS HASSUNA, GAZIPUR" and "MISS HUSNAJAN, SAHARANPUR". Disque Pathe record number 45856 has the song "Chandani Raat" and record number 45855 has the song "Sohagin Pyareya" sung by Miss Hassuna, Gazipur, the artist announces her name as "Husnajan, Gazipur". She was well trained in Hindustani classical music and had an excellent voice..

Similarly, Pathe record number 45398 with the song "Chal Chatak Matak Albeli" (Dadra) and record number 45399 with

Husnajan, Saharanpur :
Disque Pathe

the song "Naino Ne Tere Katari" (Dadra) are credited to Husnajan, Saharanpur. Both records start with a male voice announcing- "Husnajan Saharanpur recorded in Bombay". This is unusual, because recordings of that period had artists announcing their names themselves. Such announcements helped identify the artist as the recordings were pressed abroad those days. In the case of these records too, announcing the name of the artist serves this simple purpose but announcement by another person and not by the singer herself is the first peculiarity; the second peculiarity is the announcement of the place of recording, not heard in other recordings of the period found so far. The trail of peculiarities doesn't end there: though they are products of the 1910 recording session, they are not manufactured at Forest, Belgium but are made in France at Chatau (Paris) whereas Pathe Company had established its disc manufacturing facility at Forest (Belgium) by 1908 to meet the needs of processing the foreign repertoire of the company.

These Pathe records were clearly recorded by T.J. Theobald Noble who conducted recording sessions in Bombay in 1910 and then proceeded to Calcutta, Madras and Bangalore. Recordings of these sessions were released under Disque Pathe numerical series 45000 and 33000.

There was also a Husnajan of Barmer who had been appointed as an artist with Gunijankhana (the royal repertory of Master Artists) of Jaipur State at a princely salary of Rs.48 per month by Maharaja Ram Singh of Jaipur (1835-1880)

Wazirjan of Benaras was another popular singer. During his 1906-07 recording tour

Husna Jan, Saharanpur : Disque Pathe

on behalf of the Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd., William Conrad Gaisberg recorded twenty five Thumris, Ghazals, Chaitis, Horis, Dadras and Kajrees. Of these, twenty were released under the 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label (record numbers GC-3-13038 to GC-3-13052 and GC-3-13054 to GC-3-13058) and three under the 12" size 'Gramophone Monarch Record' label (record numbers 013054 to 013056). Two recordings under 10" size were not released (G.C.-3-13053 and G.C.-3-13059).

The recordings indicate that Wazirjan was a fine vocalist with a sound base of training in Hindustani light classical music. "Bansuriya Re Kaisi Bajayee Shyam" (GC 3-13040, Thumri Bhairavi), "Piya Papi Na Jage Main Jagaye Hari" (GC 3-13041, Dadra Bhairavi), "Zara Kah Do Sanwariya Se" GC 3-13054, Dadra Zilla) "Sakhi

WazirJan, Banaras : Gramophone Concert Record

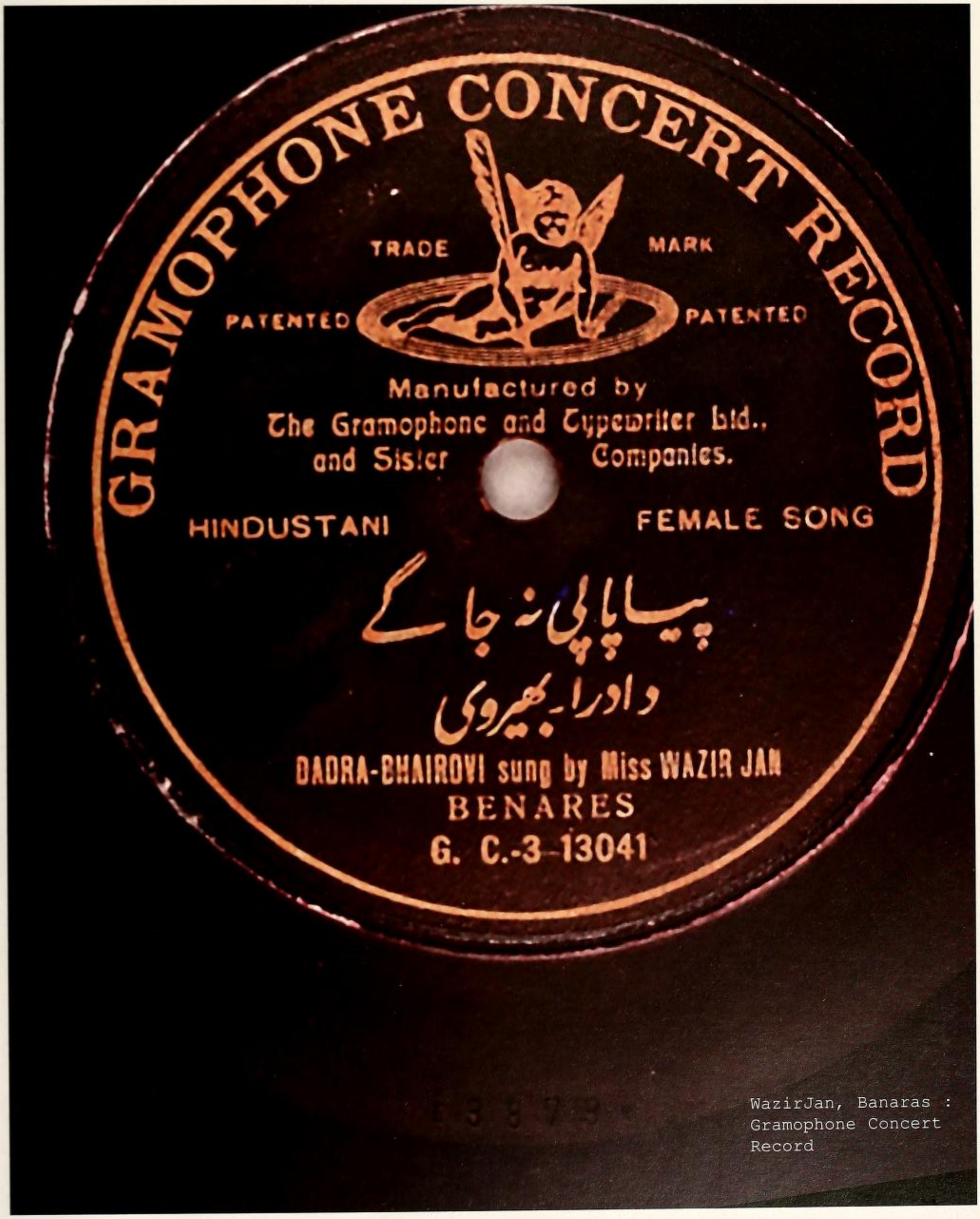
Aawat Andheri Ghata Kaari" (GC-3-13056, kajree) are some of her better known songs.

Wazirjan of Benaras had another contemporary and namesake in Lucknow- Wazirjan of Lucknow who was an excellent singer of ghazal and

WazirJan, Banaras : Gramophone Concert Record

thumri of the Lucknow gharana. Beka-Grand Company made her recordings, one such record of a ghazal in rag desh"Utthain Zillatain" under the Beka-Grand Label (record number 20678, one sided- pressed in Germany) was manufactured for "The Beka Records Ltd., Stanley Oakes and Company, Calcutta, Madras, Rangoon, Colombo". It is a product of recordings taken by Heinrich Bomb and Wilheim Hadert at Bombay during 1905. This recording session of 1905 was organised by Beka with the help of M/s Valabhadas Lakhmidas & Company, Bombay and recorded some of the artists of Lucknow and Benaras who were present at Bombay.

The fact that this recording was made in 1905, is borne by the fact that Stanley Oakes and Company, 6 Mangoes Lane, Calcutta was sole agent of the Beka-Grand Company in India for the regions of Eastern Bengal, Assam, Madras Province, United Provinces and Ceylon only till 1906. After 1906 Stanley & Oaks was




WazirJan, Banaras : Gramophone Concert Record

assigned the sole agency for non-Indian repertoires only in the above mentioned territories. As this record indicates "Made for the Stanley Oaks and Company" and represents an Indian repertoire, it is definitely made prior to 1906 and certainly during 1905 as 1905 was the only year prior to 1906 when recording experts of this company undertook a recording tour of India.

Miss Wazir Jan, Lucknow : Beka Grand Record

One comes across records of at least two other Wazirs- Wazirbai of Poona and Wazirjan of Karnal. 'Odeon' label released some of the recordings of the classical vocalists Wazirjan of Karnal. Her records were pressed in Germany. Odeon record numbers A 245110a, of Hori with the lyrics "Main To Jab Janu Piya"; A 245110b, of Deshi, with the lyrics "Ye Maro Man Har Leeno"; A 245027a, of Desh, with the lyrics "Karam More Jage"; A 245027b, of Bhoop with the lyrics" Sune Bol"; A245017a, of Bhairavi, with the lyrics "Aaja Sanwariyan Gale"; A245017b, of Jivanpuri, with the words "Chhum Chhan Na Na", preserve some of the recordings of

this artist. Similarly Odeon number S.B.2164 with record numbers S1629 of Bhairavi Dadra, with the words "Jani Bholi Suratiya" and S1601 of Nat, with the lyrics"Tu To Wo Dilruba Hai" preserve recordings of the other Wazirbai. Wazirjan of Karnal was also recorded under Beka label.

Amir is another common name among female singers of the period. Records of 'Amirjan of Panipat', 'Amirjan of Bijapur' (The Karnatic Kokil), 'Amirbai Jaipurwali' and 'Amirjan Sindhi' are evidence of the popularity of the name 'Amir'.

Miss Wazirjan (Karnal) : Odeon Record

Wazir Bai, Poona : Columbia Record

Amirjan of Panipat was first recorded by William Conrad Gaisberg during his recording tour of 1906-1907 on behalf of 'The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd.'

This session recorded thirty two renderings of hers of primarily Dadra, Ghazal, Thumri, Qawali and Hori. Twenty nine of these were released under the 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label (record numbers G.C.-3-13068 to G.C.-3-13079, G.C.-3-13652 to G.C.-3-13666 and record numbers G.C.-3-13764 and G.C.-4-12850) and three under the 12" size 'Gramophone Monarch Record' label (record numbers 013135, 013136, & 013137). Famous among these numbers are G.C.-3-13070 of Gazal Sarpada, "Khattir Se Ya Lihaz Se Main Maan Gaya"; G.C.-3-13071 of Bhajan, "Ya Phir To Main"; G.C.-3-13073 of Dadra Piloo, "Kaho Gudiya Kaisi Kati Sari Raat"; G.C.-3-13077 of Holi-Desh, "Kanhaiya Ne Gher Liya Kunjan Mein"; G.C.-3-13078 of Ghazal, "Vasant Ke Aisa Mein Sab Hijr Ka Gam Bhool Gaya"; G.C.-3-

Miss Wazir Bai : Odeon Record

13653 of Ghazal Dadra, "Bahakne Wale Aaap Ke Yar Ban Gaye"; G.C.-3-13654 of Ghazal Qawali, "Likhoon Kya Mana Teri"; and G.C.-3-13662 of Parach Qawali, "Laagi hai Betarah Barachhi Nazar Ki Parchhak Wali".

Amirjan (Panipat) was again recorded in April, 1908 by Frederick William Gaisberg and as a consequence of this her twenty two recordings were made and were released in 10" size Gramophone Concert Records (record numbers G.C.-4-13125 to G.C.-4-13130, G.C.-4-13160 to G.C.-4-13174 and G.C.-4-13428). Two popular numbers from this series were: G.C.-4-13125 of Piloo Keharwa, "Mat-Maro Nazar Ke Ban" and GC-4-13130 of Zilla Dadra, "Zadu Bhare Dou Naina Zulum Karein".

Again, Amirjan of Panipat was recorded at Delhi by The Gramophone Company Ltd. recording expert George Dillnutt between October 29 and November 12, 1909. Of the sixteen recordings taken, ten were

Amirjan of Panipat

Amirjan, Panipat : Gramophne Concert Record

released under 10" size Gramophone Concert Record label (record numbers G.C.-8-13462 to GC-8-13471 and G.C.-8-13476 to GC-8-13481) . Some better known numbers from this series are: record numbers G.C.-8-13462 of Paraj, "Gunah Jitney Huye"; G.C.-8-13465 of Hindole, " Hindola Mohe Kaun Jhulan Ko" and G.C.-8-13467 of Khamach Dadra, "Pyare-Pyare Ri Tore Naina".

Amirjan of Panipat's next recording session too was held in Delhi during 1910 by The Gramophone Company Ltd. recording expert, George Dillnutt. As a consequence of this recording session, many of her recordings were released both under the 'Gramophone Concert Record' as well as 'Zonophone Record' labels. Popular among them are numbers like X-3-103050 of Piloo, "Panghat Pe Ho Rahi Bhid" and GC-8-13953 of Pahari, "Agarche Husna Hai Unka".

Other Amirs are recorded under Columbia and Twin Record labels and their recordings are of a much later period. Whereas Amirbai Jaipurwali had a heavy voice with

1 & 2 Amirbai Jaipurwali : Columbia Record
3 & 4 Amirjan Sindhi : The Twin Record

a classical base, Amirjan Sindhi had a comparatively softer voice. The Karnatic Kokil or Amirjan of Bijapur, possessed a far superior voice than the other three Amirs. She had a sharp and high-pitched voice with a solid base of training in classical music.

Even today, these recordings present the fragrance and freshness of the renderings of these famous singers and are also remnants and reminders of their glorious years.

1

2

3

4

1,3 Amirjan, Bijapur : Columbia Record

2,4 Amirjan, Karnataki : Columbia Record

A Nautch Girl and her musicians

Photograph by F. W. Gaisberg, Calcutta

"MONARCH"/STYLE No."7" GRAMOPHONE, 1904

# 5 OTHER 'JANS' AND 'KHANS'

Peara Saheb, Mettiaburj

At the dawn of the 20th century, when the recording industry progressed and proliferated in the Indian Subcontinent, recording companies recorded a number of women singers whose last name was-Jan. Also recorded were a handful of maestros with "Khan" as a suffix to their names. These Jans and Khans rendered invaluable service to the cause of Hindustani Music. These were the days when music and its practitioners were largely patronized by Maharajas, Nawabs, Zamindars and their likes. For most singers and musicians their art was the source of their daily bread, royal patronage took care of their financial worries and created for them an environment in which they were able to practice their art.

William Conrad Gaisberg, a prominent sound recording expert of that period, travelled through India and recorded some of these greats, documented this phenomenon: "Indian artists are practically always the paid servants of the wealthy princes and Rajas, and their performances are only given at the houses of these dignitaries, to celebrate perhaps a wedding or betrothal, or some other special occasion. The most appreciated singers are the young women with very high voices. The male artists are not great favorites and their part generally, consists of teaching the girl singers their songs and making up the orchestral accompaniment. I might add that one never finds written music for these songs; they are handed down from father to son, and this has been going on for hundreds of generations. Some of the songs or one might say poems, being 2000 years old. These are taught by the head musician of the orchestra to the girl singers and they learn the songs like parrots. Each little prima donna has her own staff of musicians. One rarely hears a male singer, except when his voice resembles a woman's. I know of one case where a male artist was exceedingly popular in India and we made many records by him-his name was Peara Saheb - and one could not tell his voice from a woman's".

Though, the so-called prima donnas, the "Jans" were the cynosures of various mehfils and majlises, their musical performances were bolstered by the rigors of prolonged practice, duly backed by the masterly guidance of

their teachers, the "Khans". So the development and conservation of Hindustani music was also to some extent, a result of the concerted efforts of the "Jans" and "Khans".

A magical blend of a prima-donna and a prima ballerina, the "Jans" were omnipresent on the music scene in the Indian subcontinent. The list of their names is inexhaustible. A glowing tribute to them has been paid by Babu Sher Bahadur Singh Verma, alias Bachhu Singh "Bhakta Vaishnav" in his "Ashtottari Mala" which goes:

"Vinay Sahit Kari Paath Puni, Karaun Aanek Pranam;
Tadantar Aab Japat Hun, Ashtottar Shat Naam.
Tauki, Maina, Oomda, Munna, Uttam, Jagmag, Tara Gunna;
Chandrakala, Gulbadan, Janki, Faijjan, Bibbo aur Manki.
Chanchal,Chander,Champa,Sundar,Heera, Manik,Panna,Munder;
Bigyanee, Bigga aru Pyari, Chhami, Jani, Jandulari.
Zohra aur Mushtari, Kundan, Sadabahar, Bulakan, Gulshan;
Pancham aur Ameela, Ganno, Najo aur Alladeyee, Bannoo.
Maasuman, Mirechayee, Kalloo, Shyama,Nokhi,Bholo,Dalloo;
Hussainbandi, Jeenat, Rajjo, Gulla, Sona, Rupa, Fazzoo.
Saraswati, Yamuna, Manturan, Ganga, Sarayu aur Gafooran;
Rajnee, Babban aur Ganeshi, Bullo, Nanhi aur Maheshi.
Munga, Motijan, Imaman, Mehbooban, Sukhabadan, Gulaman;
Lakheejan, Niyamat, Kamala, Yadan, Madhaw,Shabbo,Vimala.
Haider, Mishreejan, Nawaban, Gillee,Gunchadahan,Gulaban;
Vilayatee, Husna aur Huran, Nazzo, Rangbahar, Jahooran.
Rajkalee, Shivkalee, Wazeeran, Begam Tunni aur Ameeran;
Buta, Bandeejan, Basheeran, Saddo, Maddo, aur Naseeran.
Vidyadharee, Mohammadi, Ummeda, Mahtab;
Kripa Karo Aab Bhakta per meri priye Sitab.

**[Iti Ashtottari - Mala]"**

{This verse follows the traditional format of chanting 108 names of a deity and opens with the customary invocation:
having humbly read the holy text, I bow in reverence again and again. And now I meditate on the one hundred and eight names:
Tauki, Maina, Oomda, Munna, Uttam, Jagmag, Tara Gunna;
Chandrakala, Gulbadan, Janki, Faijjan, Bibbo and Manki.
Chanchal,Chander,Champa,Sundar,Heera, Manik,Panna,Munder;
Bigyanee, Bigga and Pyari, Chhami, Jani, Jandulari.
Zohra aur Mushtari, Kundan, Sadabahar, Bulakan, Gulshan;
Pancham and Ameela, Ganno, Najo and Alladeyee, Bannoo.
Maasuman, Mirechayee, Kalloo, Shyama,Nokhi,Bholo,Dalloo;
Hussainbandi, Jeenat, Rajjo, Gulla, Sona, Rupa, Fazzoo.
Saraswati, Yamuna, Manturan, Ganga, Sarayu and Gafooran;
Rajnee, Babban and Ganeshi, Bullo, Nanhi and Maheshi.
Munga, Motijan, Imaman, Mehbooban, Sukhabadan, Gulaman;
Lakheejan, Niyamat, Kamala, Yadan, Madhaw,Shabbo,Vimala.
Haider, Mishreejan, Nawaban, Gillee,Gunchadahan,Gulaban;
Vilayatee, Husna and Huran, Nazzo, Rangbahar, Jahooran.
Rajkalee, Shivkalee, Wazeeran, Begam Tunni and Ameeran;
Buta, Bandeejan, Basheeran, Saddo, Maddo, and Naseeran.
Vidyadharee, Mohammadi, Ummeda, Mahtab;
shower your grace on your devotee dear Setab.

This chapter attempts to present short introductions of some of these 'Jans' and 'Khans' and their available recordings.

# MISS ASGARIJAN (AGRA)

Miss Asgarijan of Agra was one of the first Tappa singers recorded in the first decade of commercial sound recording in India. William Sinkler Darby of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. recorded her at Lahore in 1904-1905. This recording session resulted in nine recordings in 7" size 'Gramophone Records'(record numbers 2-12464 to 2-12472) and thirteen recordings in 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Records' (record numbers G.C. -3-12179 to G.C. -3-12191) of Asgarijan's songs. Her Tappa rendering "Naina Lagaai Dil Joban Mange" (record number 2-12470) is an excellent sample of the capabilities of this refined classical vocalist. This recording also assumes rarity because this is among the earliest recordings of Tappa made by the Gramophone Company, another being the record of the great Ustad Ramjan Khan (C-158). Today, when Tappa Gayaki is becoming rare, it is a pleasure to listen to this record. These records could be of immense help to music lovers who want to learn, study and further the cause of this form of Hindustani classical music.

Her other recordings represent her renderings of ghazal, thumari, dadra, tarana and qawali. Some of the famous numbers among these recordings are under record numbers G.C. -3-12187 of Tarana (Malkosh); "Maan Le Sunder Pyaari Mori Kahi" (G.C. -3-12181 of thumri - kafi) and "Yah Mana Hamne Bimar-e-Mohabat Ki Dawa Tum Ho"(G.C. -3-12182 of Gazal - Bharwa).

Miss Asgarijan, Agra : Gramophone Record

# MISS AZIZANJAN OF DELHI

Azizanjan, a singer of Delhi, whose recordings were made by William Sinkler Darby in 1904-1905 at Lahore on behalf of the Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd., was decidedly not an artist of the first order-she does not possess a very tuneful voice.

This was the period, when recording experts experimented with various artists with a view to search new talents and gauge their market demand. Azizanjan probably failed to come up to their expectations so only six recordings of this artist were released: "Neh Lagai Dukh De Gayo Sukh Le Gayo" (record Number 2-12475 of Dadra); "Man Sunder Le Gaiee Maar Palak" (2-12476 of Thumri) and "Dadur Bole Moriya Shor Kare" (2-12477 of Malhar) under 7" size 'Gramophone Record' label: and "Murad-e-Dil Ko Bahar Aaye Tumhara Hausala Nikle" (record numbers G.C.-3-12201 of Gazal), "Yeh Na Thi Hamari Kismet, Jo Visale Yaar Hota" (G.C.-3-12202 of Qawali) and "Hardam Fira Ke Jana" (G.C.-3-12203 of Gazal) in 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label.

Miss Azizanjan, Delhi : Gramophone Concert Record

# MISS GAFOORANJAN (HYDERABAD)

An accomplished classical singer, Gafooranjan of Hyderabad was recorded by The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. recording expert William Conrad Gaisberg, in the recording session of 1906-1907 at Hyderabad.

Consequently, seven recordings of Gafooranjan were released in 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label: G.C.-3-13403 of Tappa Zilla; G.C.-3-13253 of Jangla Kaharwa Ore Naina Situmgar Jadu Bhare) ; G.C.-3-13254 of Jhinjowti Dadra (More Saiyan Le Gaiyan Naror Gaali); G.C.-3-13255 of Asthai Khamach (Banke Balama Se Neha Lagaye); G.C.-3-13256 of Surparda (Chanchal Naar Chatur Hut Dharmi); G.C.-3-13257 of Khambaj Qawali (Tume Mere Haale Pareshan Ko Nahin Jante) and G.C.-3-13258 of Soruth Qawali (Kisi Ko Deke Dil Koi Navaye Sabzgah Kyon Ho).

Gafooranjan doesn't appear to have been recorded by any other record label.

Miss Gafooranjan, Hyderabad : Gramophone Concert Record

# MISS KALIJAN OF DELHI

After Miss Gauharjan of Calcutta, Malkajan of Agra and Miss Jankibai of Allahbad (Chhappanchhuri), if there was another popular female vocalist, it was Miss Kalijan of Delhi whose large number of recordings of Khyal, Gazal, Thumari, Tarana, Holi, Qawali and Dadra in Hindustani and some Persian songs remained in circulation in the market till the late 1920s.

Kalijan was first recorded by William Sinkler Darby for The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. in 1904-05 at Delhi. Of the eight 7" size 'Gramophone Record' label records, (record numbers 2-12423 to 2-12430) of these "Piya Milan Ko Jaane De Biranwa" ( thumari, record number 2-12428) was a popular number. Among the seventeen recordings released under 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label, "Kabhi Ban Sanwar Ke Jo Aa Gaye to Bahar-e-husn Dikha Gaye; Wo Ajab Ghadi Thee Ki Jiss Ghadi woh Hamko Rog Laga Gaye" (record numbers G.C. -3-12129 and 12130 of Gazal, Part-I and Part-II), "Mujh sa Na De, Zamane Ko Parwardigar Dil" (G.C.-3-12131 of Gazal), "Naiya Mori Majhdhar, Karo Beda Tum Hi Paar," (G.C. -3-12137 of Thumari), "Raham Ho Kab Sifat teri Moinuddin Ajmeri" (G.C.-3-12140 of Qawali) and "Dekho Ree Ek Bala Jogee Dwaar Hamare Aaya Hai Ree" (G.C.-3-12141 of Bhajan) too were quite popular.

In 1906-07 William Conrad Gaisberg recorded Kalijan at Calcutta, Lucknow and Bombay for The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. This time her thirty two recordings were released under the 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label and six under the 12" size 'Gramophone Monarch' label. Famous numbers of this series were "Piya Ka Ghar Dekh Dharkat Hai Moree Chhatiya" (record numbers G.C. -3-13094 of Thumari Desh), "Nigah-

Kali Jan Delhi :Gramophone Concert Record

e-Naaz Se Dekho Ishara Karte Jaatein Hain" (G.C. -3-13549 of Dhun Zila Qawali) and "Piya Chhaye Rahe Madhuban Mein" (G.C. -3-13573 of Dadra Kaharwa).

Seeing the growing demand for Kalijan numbers the Gramophone Company Ltd. decided to cut more records with her. The recordings made by Fredrik William Gaisberg and George Dillnutt between 1908 and1910 resulted in the release of a large number of Kalijan songs. Some of the hit numbers among these were "Tumhare Khat Main, Naya Ek Salam Kiska Tha" (record number G.C. -4-13156 of Gazal), "Raja Tore Bangley Mein Main Na Jaun Re" (G.C. -4-13280 of Piloo), "Koee Tumsa Hasin Maine Dekha Nahin" (G.C. -8- 13417 of Dadra) and "Gul Chhadiyan Na Maro Ray" (G.C. -8-13472 of Bhairvi). Pathe label also released a few records (record number 49000 and 49010) of her ghazals.

Kalijan's mellifluous voice remained popular among the masses for several years and listening to it still makes one nostalgic about a bygone era.

Kali Jan, Delhi : Gramophone Concert Record

# MISS KHURSHID JAN OF LUCKNOW

Khurshid Jan of Lucknow is still remembered for her sweet and melodious voice. The Gramophone Company Ltd. released only six records of this vocalist based on the recordings made by its expert sound recordist George Dillnutt between 18 to 29 November, 1909 at Lucknow. These records were released under the 10" size "Gramophone Concert Record" label (record numbers G.C. -8-13625 to G.C. -8-13630). The last two records from this series were also issued under 'Zonophone Record' (numbers X3-103162 and X3-103163). These two numbers "Sanwariya Re Kahe Mare Nazariya" (X-3103162 of Khammach) and "Main Jispar Jaan Deta Hun"(X-3-103163 of Gazal) were particularly popular.

During the 1906-07 recording session at Delhi, William Conrad Gaisberg also recorded a similar named artist, Khurshidjan of Cawnpur (Kanpur) for The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. Her thirteen 10" size recordings were issued under the Gramophone Concert label (record numbers G.C.-3-13606 to G.C.-3-13615, G.C.-3-13638, G.C.-3-13714 and G.C. -3-13715). Her song "Naino Ki Katriyon Se Gori Maiko Mara" (record number G.C. -3-13607 of Khamach Dadra) became a very popular number.

Two other Khursheeds- Miss Khurshed of Parsi theatres and Miss Jali Khursheed of Lucknow were also recorded by recording companies.

Khurshid Jan, Lucknow : Zonophone Record

# MISS KEETIJAN OF MERRUT

Keeti Jan of Meerutt, a popular singer, was first recorded by William Sinkler Darby for The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. between December 1904 and March 1905 at Lahore. Consequently, nineteen of her records were released- eight in 7" size 'Gramophone Record' label(record numbers 2-12454 to 2-12462 except record number 2-12457) and eleven under the 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label (record numbers G.C. -3-12167 to G.C. -3-12176 and record number G.C. -3-12198).

She was recorded again by William. C. Gaisberg during his "Far Eastern' recording tour of 1906 to 1907. He made altogether 16 recordings of Miss Keeti Jan. Of these, eleven recordings taken at Hyderabad were released in 10" size Gramophone Concert Records (record numbers G.C.-3-13259 to G.C.-3-13268 and G.C.-3-13321) and five recordings taken at Lahore were released in 12" size Gramophone records (record numbers 013100, 013073 to 013075 and 013127). George Walter Dillnutt recorded Miss Keeti Jan at Hyderabad during the recording session of April- May, 1908. These recordings were released as 10" size Gramophone Concert Records (record numbers G.C.-4-13514 and G.C.-4-13070 to G.C.-4-13081).

Miss Keeti Jan sang mainly Hindustani songs but among her records there are a few Persian numbers too. The Persian number "Bulbul Za tu Aamo Khat Sheero" (G.C.-3-12198 of Gazal) and other numbers like " Aaiso Salono Sipaiya Re Mora Chhaila" (G.C.-2-12462 of Thumari), "Tere Aashiq Tere Kuche Mein Ai Katil Aagar Jaate" (G.C.-3-12174 of Gazal), "Dukhwa Main Ka Se Kahoon Mori Sajanee" (013073 of Thumari Kamode) and "Jab Sajan Ne Chhab Dikhalayee" (G.C.-4-13071 of Gazal) are reminders of her musical talent, melodious voice and deep understanding of Hindustani classical music.

Miss Keeti Jan, Meerut

Mumtaj Jan

# MISS MUMTAJ JAN

The name Mumtaj is shared by three famous female vocalists- Mumtaj Jan of Delhi, Miss Mumtaj Jan of Agra and Miss Mumtaj of Calcutta.

William Sinkler Darby first made sixteen recordings of Mumtaj Jan of Delhi during 1904-05 at Delhi on behalf of The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. Six of these recordings of mainly dadra songs were released under 7" size Gramophone Record (record number 2-12431 and 2-12434 to 2-12438). (However, it is worth mentioning here that of the six records mentioned above, record numbers 2-12437 of Dadra is credited to 'Mumtaz Jan of Meerut' which hints at the possibi1ity of another artist with a similar name) Her rendition of the Zila dadra song "Maharaja Kiwariya Kholo Ras Ki Boonde Padein" (2-12438) proved to be very popular, it had earlier been sung by Thumari Samrat Mojuddin Khan.

Ten of Mumtaj Jan's songs in Thumri, Gazal, Qawali and other genres were released as 10" size Gramophone Concert records (record numbers G.C.-3-12142 to G.C.-3-12151). Her rendering of "Naram Kalaiyan Hongi Balam More" (record number G.C.-3-12146 Malhaar) is an excellent piece of music.

Later, sensing her popularity and ever-increasing market demand, the Gramophone Company Ltd. recorded and released more than fifty five of her numbers between 1908 and 1910. Many of these recordings were issued under the 'Zonophone' label. Some of the more famous numbers from this series were: "Tujh Bin Kaise Kate Bairi Ratiyan" (record numbers G.C.-4-13211 of Zila Dadra), "Mere Mashook Tum Ho, Yar Tum Ho, Dilruba Tum Ho" (G.C.-4-13224 of Gazal Qawali), " Wo Kahta Hai Hassin Hun, Naznin Hun " (G.C.-8-13440 of Gazal) and "Sina Se Sina Mila Jan-e-Balama" (Zonophone X-3-103059 of Dadra).

Miss Mumtaj of Calcutta was recorded during the first recording tour of Frederick William Gaisberg in 1902-1903. She used to sing for The Corinthian Theatre and other Parsi theatres of Calcutta. Her renderings for popular melodramas like "Dil Farosh" and "Kapur Chand" and "Chandravoli" were released under record numbers 13193 (Darshan Debe Darshan Lete- Dil Farosh), 13078 (Dile Nadan Ko Hum Sajaai Jayenge- Dil Farosh), 13192 (Chote Balama Nadan Se Gumaan Kare- Kapur Chand) and 13200 (a song from Chandravoli).

Another very good singer was Mumtaj Jan of Agra. In fact this Mumtaj Jan belonged to Bharatpur (Rajasthan) but since Agra was a better known center of music than Bharatpur,

Mumtaj Jan : Gramophone Concert Record

Mumtaj Jan, Agra :
His Master's Voice

The Gramophone Company Ltd. appears to have preferred to label her as Mumtaj Jan of Agra. The artist though stuck to her guns (and roots): in record numbers G.C.-12-13399 of Ghazal and G.C. 12-13400 of Ghazal Qawali, she announces her name as Mumtaj Jan of Bharatpur.

Pathe too recorded a Mumtaz Jan of Palwal(46425/ Ghazal).

# MISS NAWABJAN OF MEERUT

Between 1908 to 1910 Nawabjan alias Nawaban Tawaif of Meerut was extensively recorded by the recording experts of The Gramophone Company Ltd. Her first few recordings taken by George Dillnutt at Multan between 22nd August and 30th September 1908, resulted in the release of thirty of her records. " Dekho Kanha Ne Kaisi Kinhi Chaturai" (G.C.-4- 13459 of Bageshri); " Katil Ne Mere Dil Ko Jo Dekha Laga ke Hath" (G.C.-4-13464 of Bhairavi) and " Achhe Piya Wahi Desh Bolale, Hind Main Jee Ghabarawat Hai" (G.C.- 8- 13192 of Pahari Thumari Dadra) are some of the popular numbers in this series.

George Walter Dillnut recorded her again at the recording session of Sargodha, Punjab between 9 and 21 October, 1909. Some of the famous numbers of this series of recordings are: "Nand Ke Lal Ne Mori, Ek Hun Na Manee" (record number G.C.-8-13393 of Piloo) and "Nikas Chalo Jania Hamri Mano" (G.C.-8-13400 of Pahari).

Nawabjan's recordings between 15th November and 1st December, 1910 during the Delhi recordings conducted by the experts of The Gramophone Company Ltd yielded thirty one recordings. Her famous numbers released under the Zonophone label, "Are Ganja Na Piw Diljani" (number X-3-103335 of Piloo) and "Gori Tore Gore Gaalon Par Teel Ka Daag Hai Kala" (X-3-103336 of Pahari) are reminiscent of the magic Nawabjan the acclaimed singer-dancer wove.

The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. recording expert W.C. Gaisberg also recorded another Nawabjan, known as Nawabjan of Aligarh, during the recording session of 1906-1907. Her six recordings in 10" size Gramophone Concert Records are: record number G.C.-3-13293(Yaa Rasool Allah/Ghazal Qawwali); record number G.C.-3-13294 (Uthakar Woh Jo Kahate Hain Naqab Ahista Ahista

Nawaab Jan, Meerut

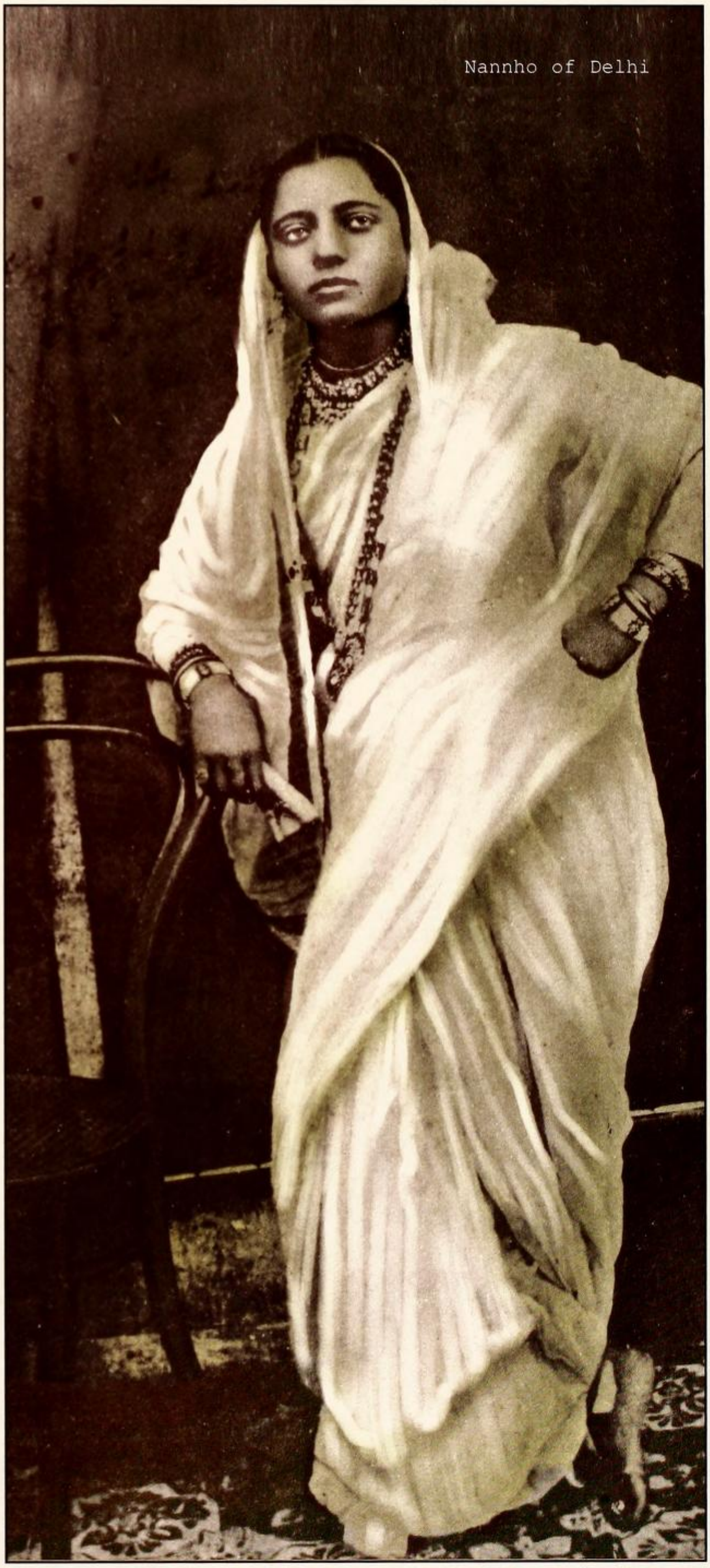
/Jhunjowti Adana Gazal); record number G.C.-3-13295 (Rakho Jagat Mein Laaj Mori Khwaja Moinuddin/Kaunsiya Jhaptal); record number G.C.-3-13345 (Behag Punjabi); record number G.C.-3-13296 (Ankhen Maloon To Kaise Maloon / Jhunjowti Dadra) and record number G.C.-3-13297 (Koi Banki Tirichi Topi Wala / Dadra Kaharwa).

# MISS NANHIJAN OF AGRA

Nahnijan of Agra was associated with the Lucknow gharana and the musical tradition of Awadh. A disciple of the great Ustad Khurseed Ali Khan of Lucknow, her music represented the Lucknow style of Thumri and Khayal rendering. Till 1904-05, only three songs of this famous singer were recorded at Lahore by William Sinkler Darby for The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. Subsequently these three records were released under 7" size 'Gramophone Record' ("Mori Nindiya Jagaye Dari Re"/ record number 2-12463 of Thumri Bhairavi) and 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' (" Aayee Ritu Naveli Ree" record number G.C-3-12177 of Basant; and "Shabad Sunaye Koyaliya" record number G.C.-3-12178 of Basant).

The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. recording expert William Conrad Gaisberg recorded Nanhijan during the Lucknow recording session of 1906-07. Out of these, thirteen recordings (record numbers G.C.-3-13108 to G.C.-3-13120) were released under 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label and two (record numbers 013063 and 013064) under 12" size 'Gramophone Monarch Record' label. Her renderings of "Ram Mori Nindiya Uchat Gayee Re" (record numbers G.C.-3-13114 of Thumri Bhairavi), "Gori Darwaaza Thaari Raho" (G.C.-3-13115 of Thumri Bhairavi) and "Zara Sa Balma Mundri Ka Nagina Re" (G.C.-3-13120 of Dadra) could invoke considerable interest in music lovers about the singing style of Lucknow which prevailed almost a century back.

Another contemporary of Nanhijan of Agra, Miss Nunnijan of Hyderabad, was recorded at Hyderabad during 1906-07 on behalf of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. An accomplished classical vocalist, Nunnijan was also a competent Tappa singer. Her renderings are preserved in ten 10" Gramophone Records (record number



Miss Nanhi Jan, Agra : Gramophone Concert Record

G.C.-3-13244 to G.C.-3-13252 and record number G.C.-3-13402). Record number G.C.-3-13245 has her Tappa rendering 'Bhayen Sujan Mahan'. Nannhibai Khetdiwalee (Jodhpur), Nannhi of Patan (Gujarat), Nannhijan of Lucknow, Nannhi of Ajmer (Rajasthan) and Nunnibegum of Gwalior (Young India record nos. DA 5218; NG 636- Meri Chitvan Ke Lakho Ghayal; and YI DA NG 637-Kale Bhi Matwale hain- Gazal) were some other wellknown singer-dancers.

Nannho of Delhi was perhaps the only one in this group to have her picture-postcard printed in Saxony, Germany.

# OOMDAJAN TANDEWALI

Although the credits on her records identified her as "Oomdajan of Hyderabad Deccan", she announced her name as "Tandewali Oomdajan". Her available repertoire indicates a faultless training in and a good command over Dhrupad, Thumri, Khayal, and Hori.

Oomdajan was first recorded by William Conrad Gaisberg during his recording tour of 1906-1907 at Hyderabad. During this session her fourteen recordings were made which were released under the 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label (numbers G.C.-3-13232 to G.C.-3 13243 and record numbers G.C.-3 - 13269 and G.C.-3-13320). Her record number G.C.-3-13233 of Paroj Dhurpad - Chowtala is an excellent rendering of Dhrupad. Some of her other Dhrupad recordings "Deen Aur Duniya Dekh Palak Mein" (record numbers G.C.-3-13242 of Sarang Dhrupad Jhaptal) and "Ai Naina Tohe Bachaun" (G.C.-3-13240 of Behag Dhrupad Chowtala) also bear testimony to her mastery over Dhrupad singing. "Ai Rangile Re Lal" (record number G.C.-3-13241) proves beyond a doubt that she was also an expert Khayal singer. A well groomed Dhrupad and Khayal singer, Oomdajan Tandewali was an artist of the highest order.

Miss Oomda Jan, Hyderabad : Gramophone Concert Record

# MISS SHAMIMJAN ALIAS SHAMIM OF LUCKNOW

Shamimjan of Lucknow, a very beautiful songstress, was a contemporary of Allahrakhi Bai of Lucknow, Muneer Bai of Orchha, Shamim Bai of Fatehpuri, Miss Buggan, Jalee Khursheed, Babban Bai, Jameelan Bai, Hameeda Bai, Tara Bai, Benazir Bai of Lucknow Zohra Bai of Agra, Nabban Bai and Mohammadi Bai of Lucknow.

She was first recorded by William Sinkler Darby during 1904-05 at the Bombay recording session of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. The result was a series of twelve records (record numbers G.C.3-12216 to G.C. 3-12227) released under 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label. Some of her famous numbers are "Piya Bin Nahin Aawat Mai Ko Chain" (G.C.-3-12222 of Thumri Zila), "Ai Suhagin Piyariyan Lari Nayan" (G.C.3-12224 of Aiman Kalyan) and "Jaaniya Tumhare Karanwa Ek Din Chalee Hain Talwaar" (G.C. 3-12227 of Kajri).

Miss Shamim Jan, Lucknow : Gramophone Concert Record

# MISS SUNDERJAN OF BADAYUN

The Gramophone Company Ltd. recording expert George Walter Dillnutt recorded Miss Sunderjan of Badayun at Hyderabad in April-May 1908. Though the book "The Gramophone Company's Indian recordings 1908 to 1910" documents her as Miss Sunderjan of Hyderabad, she actually hailed from Badayun town of the present day Uttar Pradesh. This is confirmed on listening to her records wherein she has announced her name as "Sunderjan of Badayun".

Only six of her recordings (record numbers G.C.4-13082 Gazal, G.C.-4-13083 Gazal, G.C. 4-13084 Gazal, G.C.-4-13085 Dadra, G.C.-4-13086 Holi and G.C.-4-13087 Thumri Bhairavi) were released under the 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label. Her rendering of "Kaun Tarah Se Tum Phenkat Holi" (record number G.C. 4-13086) and "Chhodo Chhodo Re" (record number G.C. 4-13087) are fine examples of the great command Sunderjan had over the light genre of Hindustani classical music.

# MISS ZEBANJAN ( JHAJJAR) DELHI

Miss Zebanjan of Jhajjar or Delhi was a prominent singer of the early 20th Century. Her popularity among music lovers and growing market demand made her a favorite artist of The Gramophone Company Ltd. which released a large number of her records. Her available recordings are ample proof of this artist's superb quality of rendition and splendid grasp of music.

Her first twenty five recordings were taken by William Sinkler Darby during 1904-05 at Delhi. Of these, twelve (record numbers G.C.2-12417 to G.C. 2-12422; G.C. 2-12432; G.C. 2-12439 to G.C. 2-12443) were issued in 7" size 'Gramophone Records' and the remaining (G.C. 3-12119 to G.C. 3-12128; G.C. 3-12152 to G.C. 3-12154) in 10" size 'Gramophone concert Records'. She generally rendered Ghazals, Dadras, Qawalis and Thumris in Hindustani though a few were sung in Persian too. A good Tappa singer, some of Zebanjan's popular numbers were "Dhoom Hai Teri Bewafai Kee" (record numbers 2-12441 of Ghazal Qawali), " Dil Key Andar Yaar Ka Jalwa Nazar Aaya" (G.C. 3-12121 of Gazal) and " Laila Ko Yaar Tune Majnu Banake Mara." (G.C. 3-12124 of Gazal).

Between 1908 and 1910 she was again recorded at Multan and Delhi for The Gramophone Company Ltd. Altogether, about eighty of her recordings were taken many of which were also issued under the 'Zonophone Record' label.

Some of her popular numbers recorded during this period are: "Banke Balamawa Se Neha Laggaye" (record numbers G.C.-8-13180 of Zila Kaharwa), "Teri Banki Ada Ne Maar Dala Mujhe' (G.C. 4-13468 of Sohani Kaharawa), " Zoban Ki Jhalak Dikhlake Mujhe" (G.C. 8-13504 of Piloo), "Nand Ke Lala Ne Mori Ek Hun Na Mani" (Zonophone x-3-103180 of Gazal) and "Teri Chal Se Ab Nahi Shikwa-e-Gam"

(Zonophone x-3-103181 of Gazal).

Though records variously mention her name as Zebanjan Jhajjar (Delhi) or Zebanjan Jhajjar or Zebanjan Delhi, the singer appears to be the same person. Her records represent an era of Indian music, fabulously rich in lyrics as well as in the style of presentation.

William Conrad Gaisberg also recorded Miss Zeban of Saharanpur, a contemporary of Zebanjan Jhajjar (Delhi) at Lucknow in 1906 - 1907. Mainly a Gazal, Qawali and Dadra singer (G.C. 3-13121 to 3-13134), Zeban of Saharnpur was nowhere near her namesake in artistry or popularity and was not recorded again by The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd.

Miss Zebanjan of Jhajjar, Delhi : Gramophone Concert Record

# USTAD AHMED KHAN OF LAHORE

Ustad Ahmed Khan of Lahore, a great vocalist, was recorded by William Sinkler Darby during the second "Far Eastern" recording tour of 1904-05 organised by The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. Only six recordings of this great teacher were made at Calcutta and were released under 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label: "Pharkan Lagi Mori Ankhiyan" (record numbers G.C.-2-12862 of Nat Malhar); "Hai Re Khojat Phirat Sajan" (G.C.-2-12863 of Ghandhari); "Piya Ko Jaane Na Doongi" (G.C.-2-12864 of Bhairavi Dadra); "Madhuban Shyam Bhulaye Gayo Ri" (G.C.-2-12865 of Piloo); Tarana- Gaur Sarang (G.C.-2-12866) and "Ai Man Jane Na Doongi" (G.C.-2-12867 of Kamod Qawali).

Listening to his recordings is an enthralling experience that transports the listener to the rare realm of Hindustani classical music to which this great master belonged. Nicole label also released record number C-17 of one Ustad Ahmed Khan of Calcutta during 1904-05.

Ahmed Khan, Lahore : Gramophone Concert Record

# SANGEET RATNA USTAD ABDUL KARIM KHAN

Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, the maestro who conceived, evolved and popularised the Kirana Gharana, was born on 11th November 1872 at Kirana town of the Muzaffarnagar District of modern Uttar Pradesh. His father Kale Khan and uncle Abdullah Khan were sarangi players of repute and master Khayal singers. They were his first teachers. Abdul Karim Khan was perhaps the first North Indian musician who mastered some Carnatic ragas and successfully incorporated them into the Hindustani stream. He traveled extensively within the Indian subcontinent in pursuit of music.

According to late Susheela Misra "not only did he develop his own "Kirana style of Khayal-badhat", but in his voice even the Thumri "shed its gossamer erotic undertone" and assumed instead the "character of a sad passive and devout supplication". Many reputed musicians today refer to Abdul Karim Khan Saheb as "Sachche Swaron Ke devata" (The God of true notes). Years of strenuous "Mandra-Sadhana" (early morning practice for several hours in the lower notes) allowed his sweet and melodious voice to mingle indistinguishably with the drone of the Tanpura. Another outstanding quality of his music was its rich detailing of the emotional element and mood. While singing Khayal he concentrated mostly on Alap and avoided Layakari, boltans etc., probably because he felt these might spoil the emotional atmosphere he had built. 'Kans' (grace notes) and "gamakas" as in the Sarangee and beautiful long unbroken "meends" (glides) as in the Veena, were

Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, Baroda : Gramophone Record

1&2 Abdul Karim: Disque Pathe
3 Sarswati Mirajkar: Odeon Record
4 Suresh Babu Mane: Columbia Record

some of the chief embellishments of his renderings.

Khan Saheb's first wife Gafooran was the daughter of Abdul Rahim Khan of Kairana and cousin of Abdul Wahid Khan. Subsequently he married Tarabai Mane and the couple was blessed with five children- Suresh Babu Mane (Abdul Rehman), Hirabai Barodekar (Champutai), Kamala Bai Barodekar (Gulab), Saraswati Mane ( nick-named Sakin Chotutai, after her marriage she made recordings under the name of Saraswati Rane), and Krishna Rao Mane (Abdul Hamid, Alias Papa). Though all the children inherited the musical gift of the parents, Suresh Babu Mane (record Number CEI-29116) and Hirabai Barodekar turned out to be musical prodigies.

Apart from his own children, the legendary Sawai Gandharva (Ramabhau), Shankar Rao Sarnaik and Balkrishnabua Kapileshwari too trained with the Ustad. His emotional attachment to his student Banu Bi Latkar (also known as Saraswati Bai Mirajkar) led to strained relations with his wife Tara Bai. His own recordings, recordings of his children, Banubi and other disciples reflect his great style and mastery. He spent most of his life at Baroda, Poona and Miraj.

Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, was first recorded by the recording expert William

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Sinkler Darby during 1904-05 on behalf of The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. This recording session resulted in the release of fifteen of his recordings in 7" size "Gramophone Record" label, ten in 10" size "Gramophone Concert Record" label and seven in 12" size "Gramophone Monarch" label.

The fifteen recordings released in 7" size records (record numbers 3-12625 to 3-12639) are mainly of Khayal, Thumri, Tarana and some other famous Ragas like Basant, Jogia etc. Among these recordings his rendering of "Ab Tum Dhiraj Dharo" (Khayal Bhimpalasi record number 3-12625), and of "Paniyan Bharan Main Kaise Jaun" (Thumri Telang record number G.C.-3-12631) were quite popular. The ten recordings released in 10" size records (record numbers G.C.-3-12290 to G.C.-3-12299) are mainly of the Ustad's rendition of Khayal and Tarana. Noteworthy numbers in this series are "Piya Piya Rate Re Papihara" (record number GC-3-12294 of Khayal Lalit) and "Mori Ankhiyon Mein Parat Gulal" (record number GC-3-12298 of Khayal Hindol). His seven recordings issued under 12" size records(record numbers 012056 to 012062) were also primarily of Khayal, Tarana and Thumri. Among these some of his famous numbers were "Barsan Lagi Re Badariya" (record numbers 012057 of Khayal Malhar) and "Pag Laagan De" (record number 012061 of Khayal Malkosh).

Ustad Abdul Karim Khan was much sought after by the recording majors. Subsequently many recordings of this great Ustad were issued under the 'Columbia' label. He is also known to have cut some Pathe records which have not been traced so far (two Pathe records bearing record numbers 46334 and 46999 of an artist named Abdul Karim do exist but the artist's announcement contained in these recordings tells they are of an Abdul Kareem who belonged to Ferozabad, Multan, now in Pakistan).

## PROF. BARKATULLAH KHAN

Prof. Barkatullah Khan was a legendary sitar player and disciple of the great Ustad Allahdiya Khan of Jaipur Gharana. He was a celebrated sitariya who learnt his art from his illustrious cousin and acclaimed guru, the great Amir Khan Sitariya. His guru was said to be the second best after the greatest sitarist Amrit Sen Seniya who was his guru as well as maternal uncle. Prof. Barkatullah Khan taught many famous musicians like Ustad Ashiq Ali Khan, his son Mushtaq Ali Khan and famous Singer Surshree Kesarbai Kerkar.

William Sinkler Darby recorded this great sitarist during the recording session of 1904-05 on behalf of The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd., at Delhi. These recordings were subsequently issued in the form of 10" size discs, under the label of 'Gramophone Concert Record' (record number G.C.-17372 of Sitar- Piloo and G.C.-17373 of Sitar -Bhup Kalyan). His 'Bhup Kalyan' recitation was reissued under HMV label indicating record number G.C.-17372 (wrongly attributed, originally the recitation of Bhoop Kalyan by Prof. Khan was released as record no.G.C.-17373) coupled with record number G.C. 19384 of Esraj by of Prof. N.M. Chuckerbutty of Calcutta.

Prof. Barkatullah Khan

Prof. Khan's recitation harks back to the heritage of the highly revered Ustad Masit Khan, son of the legendary Rajras Khan and inventor of the Masitkhani and Rezakhani Bazs.

# USTAD CHOONOO KHAN OF RAMPUR

The sarod maestro Ustad Choonoo Khan of Rampur was first recorded at Hyderabad by William Conrad Gaisberg during his 1906-07 recording tour of India. Consequently six recordings of the Ustad's presentations of Bhairavi, Kafi, Tilak Kamod, Jhinjowti, Kambodi, and Pahari were released under the 10"size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label (record numbers G.C. 16250 to G.C. 16255).

Ustad Choonoo Khan was a participant in the 'All India Music Conference' held at Lucknow during 1924-25 and was widely appreciated and much applauded by the audience.

Some of Ustad Choonoo Khan's recordings of sarod recitations were later issued by The Gramophone Company Ltd. under the HMV label. HMV record numbers 8-15361, 8-15362, 8-15429, and 8-15430 are some representative samples of the musical talent of this great Ustad.

1&3 Chhunnu Khan, Rampur: His Master's Voice
2&4 Chhunnoo Khan, Rampur: His Master's Voice (also spelt as chunno, chunnoo)

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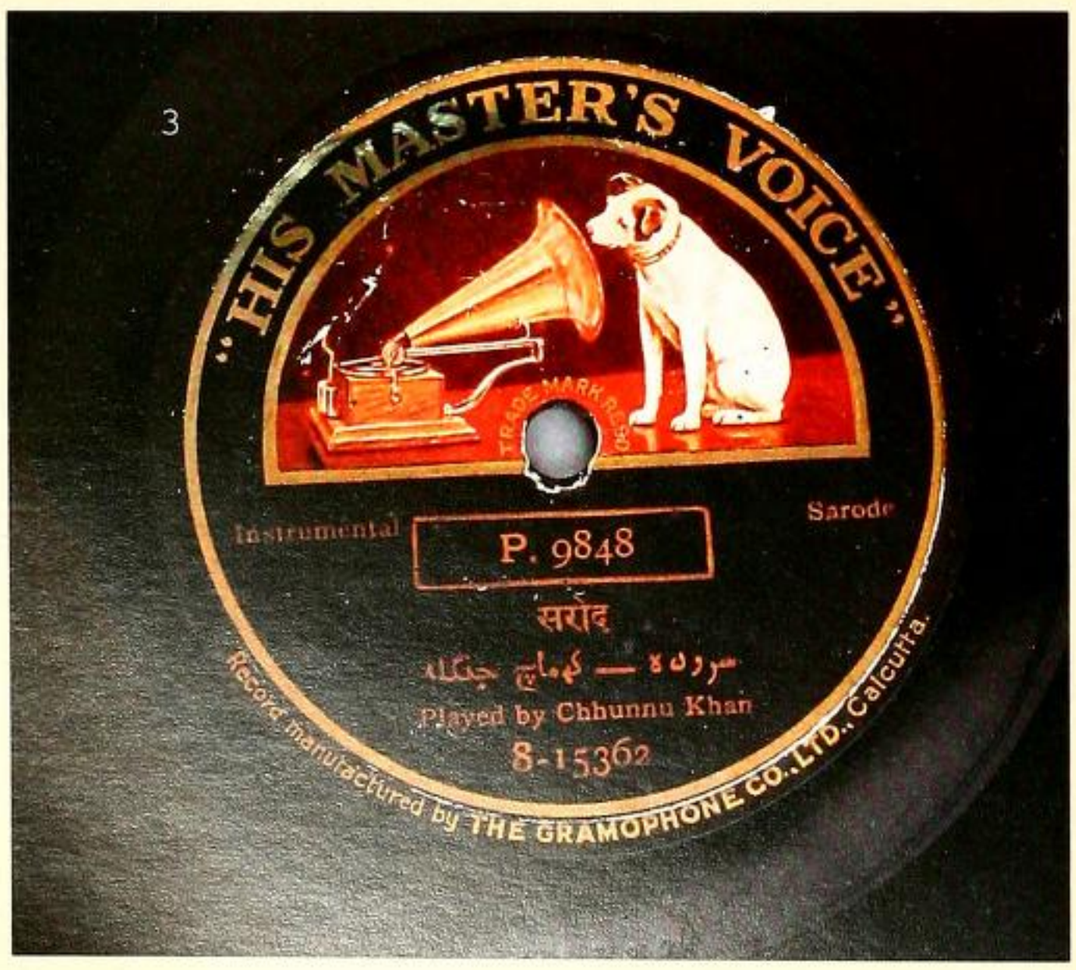


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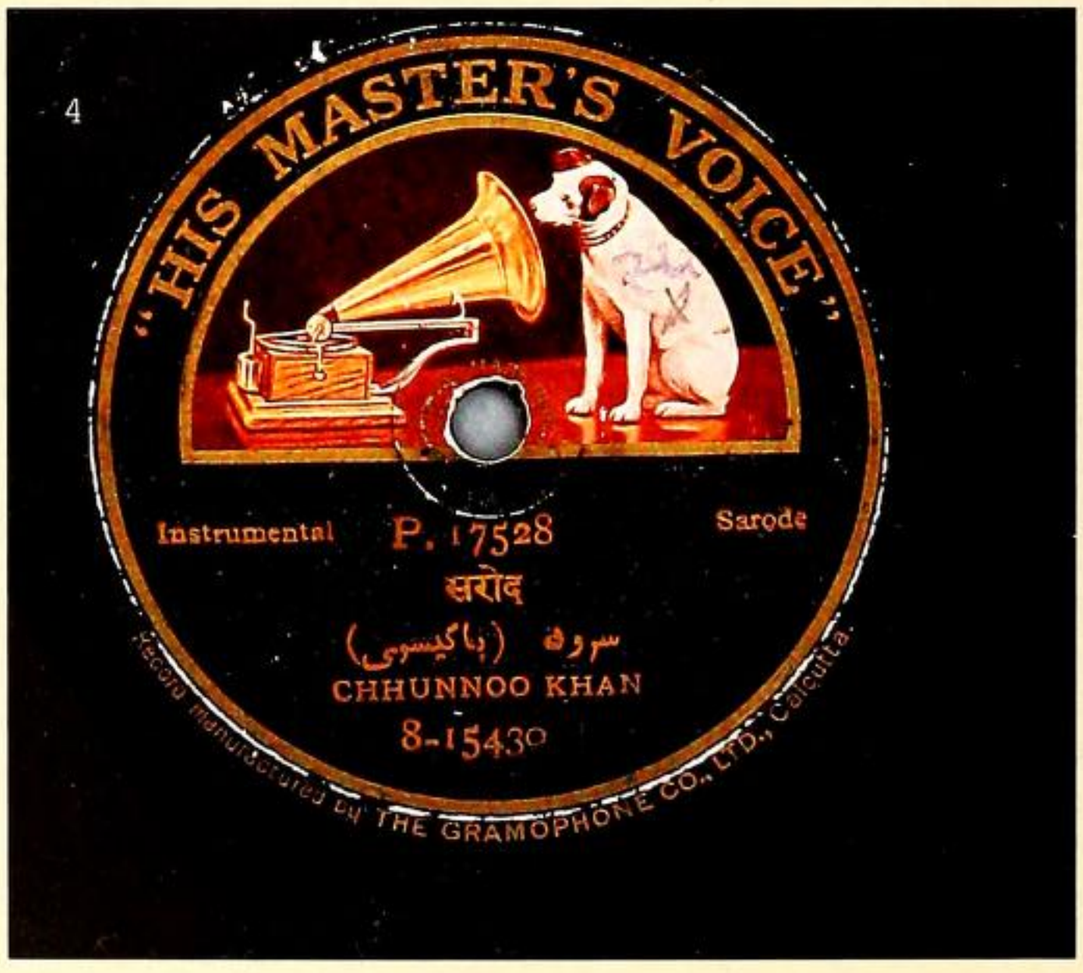


# USTAD IMDAD KHAN OF DELHI

Sitar maestro non-pareil Ustad Imdad Khan, the progenitor of the "Imdadkhani Baz" school of sitar, was born in Etawah, Uttar Pradesh in 1848. His father Ustad Sahebdad Khan alias Haddu Singh a disciple of Hassu Khan and Haddu Khan of Gwalior, had converted to Islam and was the son of the famous Dhrupad exponent and court musician of Delhi, Sujan Singh.

Ustad Imdad Khan learnt music from Ustad Bande Ali Khan (Kirana), Ustad Sajjad Muhammad Khan (Senia) and Ustad Rajab Ali Khan (Jaipur). He also served at the courts of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Awadh, Raja Sir Jyotindra Mohan Thakur of Calcutta and the Holkar of Indore.

Ustad Imdad Khan's devotion to music turned him into something of a recluse. It is said that once while he was practicing music, he was informed of his daughter's serious illness-she was on her death bed. By the time the Ustad finished his riyaz, his daughter was dead. He trained Ustad Mamman Khan (father in-law of the great sarangiya Ustad Bundu Khan) and his son Inayat Khan. He died at the ripe age of 72 in 1920.

The tradition of 'Imdadkhani Baz' was kept alive by his illustrious son, successor and student Ustad Inayat Khan who was born in 1895 at Etawah. Ustad Inayat Khan, also a disciple of Allahdiya Khan, Allah Bande Khan and Zakiruddin Khan (Jaipur) emerged as a great sitar and surbahar player. He was also a fine vocalist. He started his career as a court-musician of Indore and by 1924 was made the court-musician of Gouripur in Mymensingh by Raja Brajendra Kishore Roy Chowdhuri. Ustad Inayat Khan stayed at Gouripur till his death on November 11th, 1938. He taught music to his illustrious sons Vilayat Khan (b.1928) and Imrat Khan (b.1935). Shri Birendra Kishore Ray Chaudhari of Gouripur was also his distinguished disciple. His son Vilayat Khan further kept the tradition of 'Imdadkhani Gharana' alive. He learnt music from his mother Bashiran Bibi, uncle Waheed Khan, maternal grand-

(l-r: Ustad Ashiq Ali Khan (sitar), Ustad Enayat Khan (surbahar), center-Ustad Imdad Khan (sitar), Ustad Wahid Khan (surbahar), far right-Ustad Sakawat Hussain Khan (sarod)

Rajab Ali Khan

father Bande Hussain Khan and Ustad Faiyaz Hussain Khan (Agra). He also trained his younger brother Ustad Imrat Khan in the musical traditions of his family. This tradition is being continued by Ustad Shujat Khan (son of Ustad Vilayat Khan) and Wajahat Hussain Khan (son of Imrat Khan) and many other disciples of this Gharana.

Only a few recordings of the great Ustad Imdad Khan were made and released. He was first recorded in 1904-05 by William Sinkler Darby at Calcutta on behalf of The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. Issued under 'Gramophone Concert Record' label (record numbers G.C.17360 to G.C.17365) they present his sitar recitations of Jaunpuri Qawali (G.C.-17360), Behag Qawali (G.C.-17361), Khambaj Qawali (G.C.-17362), Kafi Qawali (G.C.-17363), Sohini Qawali (G.C.-17364) and Jaunpuri Ka Alap, Todi (G.C.-17365).

Later, HMV also released his recordings under G.C.-8-15090 (Bhairavi) and G.C.8-15094 (Ashawari).

For students of music and researchers curious about the "Imdadkhani Baz" these recordings of its founder are an immense help and guidance.

Imdad Khan:
Gramophone Concert
Record

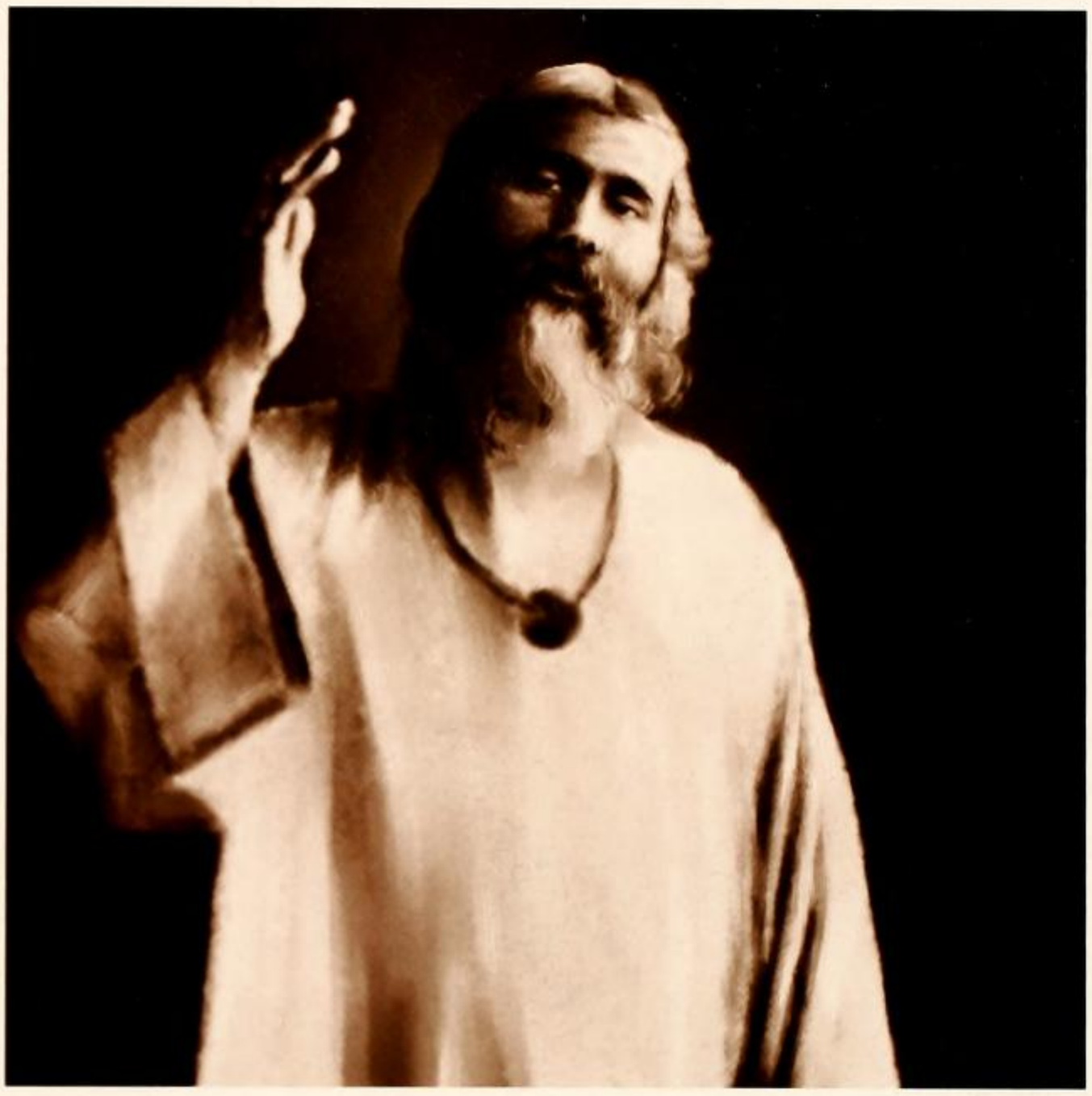
# PIR-O-MURSHID PROFESSOR INAYAT KHAN R. PATHAN (THE MODERN TANSEN)

Prof. Inayat Khan Rahmat Khan Pathan (1882-1927) came from an illustrious family of musicians. He was the grandson of Prof. Moulabux (1833-1896), a great Rudrabeen player and an eminent musician- musicologist who founded 'Gayan Shala' under the patronage of Maharaja Sayajirao-III Gaekwad of Baroda and also introduced a periodical on music "Gayanbidh Setu" in 1870. Inayat Khan's grand-mother Kashim Bibi was the granddaughter of Tipu Sultan. Ustad Moulabux Khan also known as Chole Khan, was the son of Ustad Ghise Khan Enver Khan of Bhiwani and a disciple of the great Ustad Ghasit Khan. Ustad Moulabux Khan is remembered as one of the pioneers who introduced the notation system in Hindustani music. He was also the first to present Hindustani music in Western notation.

Inayat Khan was an exceptionally brilliant and precocious child. His father's religious teachings inculcated in him the love for God and also respect for other religions which culminated in his initiating the international Sufi movement in Europe later.

Inayat khan studied music under his grandfather Ustad Moulabux and topped the Gayan Shala, Baroda examination in both vocal and instrumental music. He mastered the Hindustani as well as Carnatic styles of Indian classical music and devoted himself to the cause of music. Between 1900 and 1910, Inayat Khan toured India and also visited Nepal in pursuit of music. During this tour he came in contact with serious practitioners of music, music lovers, sufi mystics and spiritual gurus.

His academic and spiritual inclinations led him to conduct lecture-demonstrations



Inayat Khan Rahmat Khan Pathan

on music highly praised for their spiritual content and clarity of ideas. An aura of mysticism grew around him. In her book "Great Master of Hindustani Music" late Susheela Mishra recounts an anecdote: "....the Nizam of Hyderabad asked Inayat Khan to explain why listeners found his music "so divine and magical", he replied - "Your Highness, sound is the highest source of manifestation, it is mysterious within itself and whosoever has the knowledge of sound, he indeed knoweth the secret of the universe. My music is my thought and my thought is my emotion. The deeper I dive into the ocean of feelings, the more beautiful are the pearls I bring forth in the form of melodies. My music is my Religion. Therefore, worldly success can never be a proper price for it and my sole object in music is to achieve perfection." The reply impressed the Nizam so deeply that he bestowed on Inayat Khan the title "The Modern Tansen".

Between 1910 and 1926, Inayat Khan travelled in Europe extensively and delivered lectures on Indian philosophy, mysti-

cism and Sufism and also organised lecture-cum-demonstrations on Indian classical music. According to Dr. Susheela Misra, "through these lectures-cum-demonstrations he revealed to the Westerners a rich hidden Indian world of endless treasures, spiritual and artistic. With his varied accomplishments, his rare qualities of head and heart and his noble manners Inayat Khan was one of the best "Cultural Ambassadors" that India has had. But since he spent the best part of his life from the age of 28 till the last year abroad very little is known about him in his own country".

Inayat Khan

He also wrote some music related books namely 'Minaqar Mousiquar', 'Shree Sayaji Garbavali', "Inayat Fiddle Shikshak" and 'Inayat Harmonium Shikshak'. His lectures on Sufism were compiled and published in the form of a book under the title "The Inner Life". He married an American Miss Ora Ray Baker who was later known by the name Sharada Ameena Begum.

Inayat Khan :
Gramophone
Concert Record

Sufi Inayat Khan was recorded by the recording expert of The Gramophone Company Ltd. Mr. George Walter Dillnutt at Calcutta in September 1909. During this session altogether thirty seven of his recordings were made. These were issued under 10" size Gramophone Concert Records (record numbers G.C.-8-12386 to G.C.-8-12397 and G.C.-8-12417 to G.C.-8-12441). Except for a few Persian and Punjabi songs, all these recordings are presentations of popular ragas and religious songs in Hindustani. The rare gems from this series are: "Ram Nam Bin Sukh Nahin Pyare" (record number G.C.-8-12390 of Malhar), "Dil Band-e-Mehbub-e-Khuda Shud Che Baja Shud" (G.C.-8-12394 of Kasida-e-Makhdum, Persian), " Jab Uske kam ka na mere kamka hai dil" (G.C.-8-12396 /Ghazal Aasaf), "Laag Rahi To So Lagan" (G.C.-8-12432 of Dhrupad Khamach) and "Sun Le Suron Mein Kahe Hai Jamana" (G.C.-8-12437 of Kasida-e-Inayat).

This great soul, also popularly known as 'Pir-O-Murshid' Hazrat Inayat Khan, breathed his last in 1927 at Delhi.

# USTAD MUNAH KHAN OF BAREILLY

Ustad Munne Khan of Bareilly, a fine vocalist was recorded by The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. recording expert William Sinkler Darby, in 1904-05 at Calcutta.

The Ustad's twelve recordings, primarily of some popular ragas, were released for commercial sale under 10" size records of 'Gramophone Concert Record' label (record numbers G.C.-2-12793, G.C.-2-12794, G.C.-2-12848 to G.C.-2-12851 and G.C.-2-12868 to G.C.-2-12873). "Jhanjh Muraliya Baje" (record number G.C. 2-12793 of Bhupali Qawali); Tarana - Kalyan (G.C.-2-12794); "Kadar Rahim-Karim" G.C. 2-12868 of Multani, and "Bairaag Jog Kathin Bandhu" (G.C.-2-12872 of Bhairvi Bhajan) were some very popular discs this great artist cut. Nicole label also issued few records of one Ustad Mooney Khan (C-250, and C-251).

Munah Khan, Bareilly: Gramophone Concert Record

Ustad Mushtaq Hussain Khan

# USTAD MUSHTAQ HUSSAIN KHAN (RAMPUR)

Ustad Mushtaq Hussain Khan of the Rampur-Sahaswan Gharana was a great Khayal exponent and renowned musician of his time. Born in 1880 at Sahaswan, Badaun, Uttar Pradesh, he initially trained at home under his father Ustad Kallan Khan and elder brother Ustad Ashiq Hussain Khan. Later, he trained with luminaries like Ustad Inayat Hussain Khan of Sahaswan (a descendant of the famous Khayal exponents Ustad Haddu and Ustad Hassu Khan of Gwalior), Ustad Haider Khan, Ustad Muhammed Hussain Khan and Ustad Wazir Khan (Senee). Ustad Wazir Khan of Rampur trained him in Dhruvapada. Mushtaq Hussain Khan's music was highly influenced by the style of Ustad Mahboob Khan alias Daras Piya and Ustad Puttan Khan of Atrauli, the great duo who were as famous as the Alia-Fattu duo of Patiata (Ustad Ali Baksh and Ustad Fateh Ali Khan).

In 1894 Mushtaq Hussain Khan accompanied his guru Ustad Inayat Hussain Khan to Nepal where they were granted the royal patronage by the King of Nepal. This sojourn was short-lived as Mushtaq Hussain fell seriously ill. The duo then returned to Hyderabad and lived there for almost a decade. Thereafter the Ustad shifted to Rampur and served the Rampur Darbar for forty long years. He was a fellow of the Sangeet Natak Academy and was honoured with the President's Award in 1952. In 1957, he was awarded the "Padma Bhushan" for his services to Hindustani classical music.

Mushtaq Hussain was first recorded at Hyderabad in April 1908 by George Walter Dillnutt on behalf of the Gramophone Company Ltd. This recording session resulted in the release of eleven recordings under the 10" size 'Gramophone Concert Record' label (record numbers G.C.-6-12135 to G.C.-6-

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2

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12138 and G.C.-5-12670 to G.C.-5-12676) and also under the 'Zonophone Record' label (X3-102422 to X3-102427). These recordings identify him as "Mushtak Hussain" and sometimes as "Mustak Hussein- Bareilly".

Record numbers G.C. 6-12135 of Khayal Sarang, with the lyrics "Eere Lal Mere Mahal" and G.C. 6-12137 (Zonophone Number X-3-102427) of Ashawari with the lyrics "Nahin Hai Kuchh Moke" represent some of his excellent renderings. Some of his records were also issued later under HMV and Columbia labels. His rendition of Yaman Kalyan with the lyrics "Yeree Mairee" (Record No. HMV 80-1634) and of Jaunpuri with the lyrics "Chhannana Bichwa Baje" (Record number HMV 80-1633) are a joy to listen.

Under the Columbia label, the Ustad has been named as Fakhr-i- Mansigi Ostad Mushtaq Hussain Khan Rampuri (Record number. CEI.-14163 of Thumri and reverse side record number CEI.-14164 of Alhaya Vilawal).

A great stalwart of Hindustani Classical music whose name became synonymous with the music of Rampur Gharana, Ustad Mushtaq Hussain Khan passed away on August 16, 1964 at Delhi.

1&3 Ostad Mushtaq Hussain : His Master's Voice
2&4 Ostad Mushtaq Hussain : Columbia Record

# VILAYAT HUSSAIN KHAN AND SADAK ALI KHAN

Vilayat Hussain khan was an excellent shahnai player and was popularly known as Vilaithu. His brothers Sadak Ali Khan and Allan Khan alias Ali Bux Khan too were well known exponents of shahnai. Together the brothers trained their sister's son, the legendary Bismillah Khan, in the intricacies of shahnai. Though young Bismillah learnt shahnai from all the three maternal uncles, he was more influenced by the teachings of Vilayat Hussain Khan and Ali Bux Khan, his eldest and youngest maternal uncles. The family formed a 'Vilaithu Bismillah Party' of Banaras which played shahnai and performed all over the country. This highly acclaimed troupe also participated in the All Bengal Music Conference held at Calcutta in 1934.

Vilaithu was an expert of Taan and Laykari in shahnai and was a well-known figure of his time. Today a number of recordings of Ustad Bismillah Khan are available in the market but sadly, coming across the recordings of his maternal uncles Vilayat and Sadak Ali Khan is a rare phenomenon. The Star Hindustan Record (manufactured by the Star of Hindustan Record Company of 1936) released some records of 'Vilaithu Bismillah Party of Banaras'. However, the real gems are records released by M/s Pathe Freres and M/s Beka Grand Companies. Pathe record Numbers 45809 Poorvi Tetala and 45808 of Kafi Tetala of Vilaithu are products of the 1910 recording session conducted by T.J. Theobald Noble on behalf of the Pathe Freres.

1 Blaithu Benares: Pathe Record
2 Vailatu & Sadak Ali: Beka Grand Record

A collector's delight, the labels of these Disque Pathe records carry the legend 'Made in Belgium', the additional inscription 'Made in France', has been struck off by a line. They seem to have been pressed during a transitional phase- M/s Pathe Freres established its record pressing facility at Chatau (Paris-France) but subsequently shifted it to Forest (Belgium) and all its Indian releases were then pressed there.

Other rare numbers are two recordings of Vilaitu and Sadak Ali released under the label of 'Beka Grand Record', manufactured in Germany. These were imported by 'The Talking Machine & Indian Records Co. Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras and Rangoon'. Record number 21311 is a shahnai recital of Asawari and record number 21313 a shahnai recital of Tailana Bhairavi.

These recitations of the Ustads of Ustad Bismillah Khan are rare documents of music that must be preserved for posterity.

The contributions of the 'Jans' and the 'Khans' were complementary-both extended yeoman service in the cause of Hindustani classical music. Theirs was a symbiotic relationship and its mutuality coupled with their inter-dependence helped in the preservation of the body and the soul of Hindustani classical music during a long and difficult period of transition. The cultural history of India shall ever remain incomplete without a mention of the Jan-Khan duo.

1 Vailatu & Sadak Ali: Beka Grand Record
2 Vilayatu Bismillah : Star Hindusthan Record

The fort of Akbar at Allahabad

Artist Unknown

EDISON "TRIUMPH" PHONOGRAPH,
MODEL "B," 1906

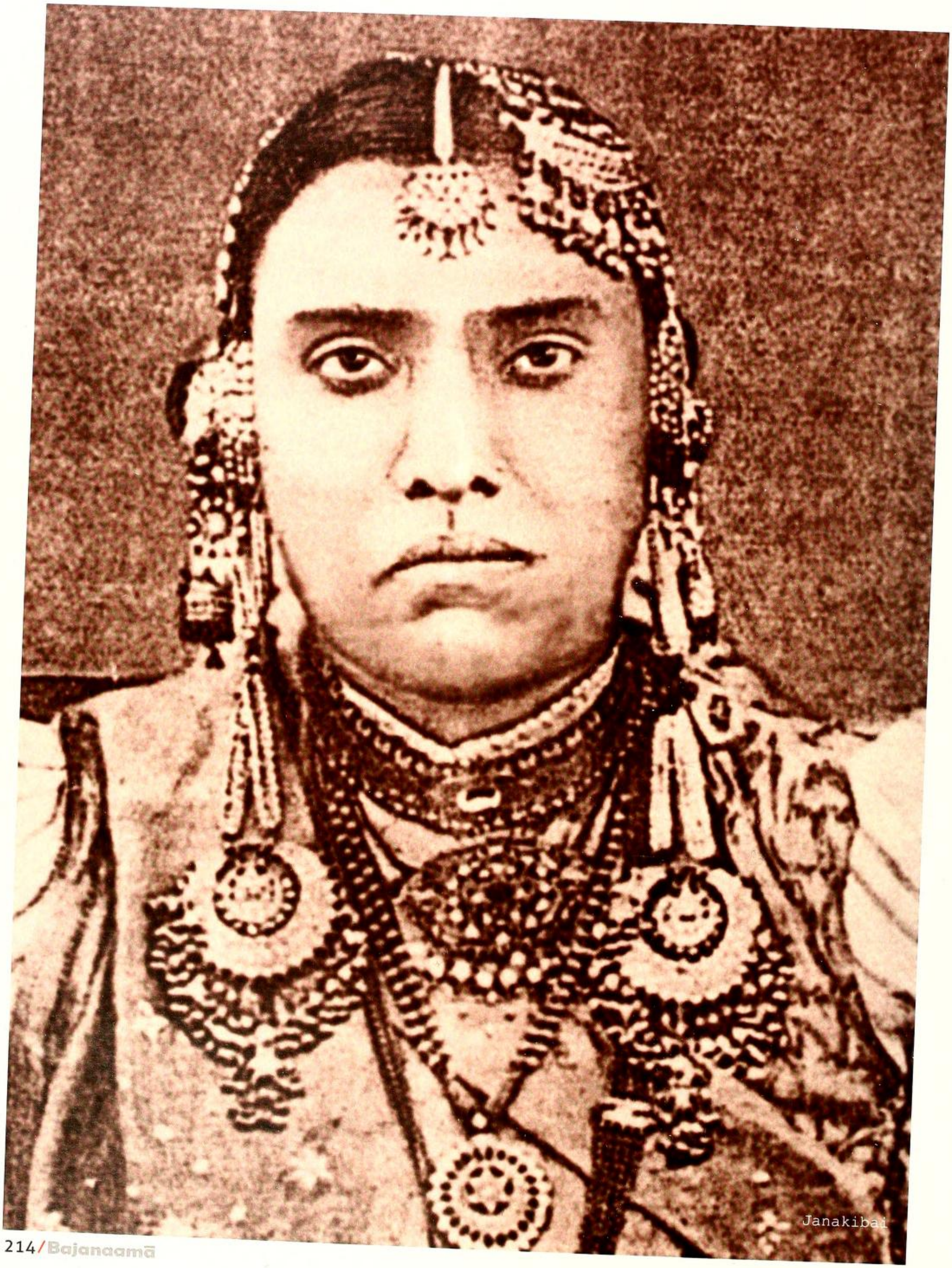
# 6 JANKIBAI: CHAPPANCHURI OF ALLAHABAD

Janakibai

It was the auspicious occasion of a wedding in the family of the Maharaja of Rewa. Befitting the occasion and the status of the host, a connoisseur of all things fine, star musicians had been invited from all over the country to perform at a mehfil organised to entertain the aristocratic guests. The talent scouts had also roped-in a relatively little known but talented singer from Allahabad, Jankibai. Preparations were in full swing and the mehfil was to commence shortly. Suddenly there were excited whispers-someone had managed to see Jankibai, she had an ugly face crisscrossed with scars! The Maharaja was promptly appraised of the situation. An ugly singer at a mehfil like this was unheard of. Janakibai was forbidden to participate in the mehfil. The never-say-die Jankibai pulled some strings (and possibly greased some palms) and somehow managed to perform in the mehfil from behind the purdah in the guise of a shy new singer. The listeners were stunned. Such pure notes, such a sweet voice! The Maharaja requested the songstress to come out of the purdah. Jankibai stepped out from behind the curtain, seeing her face the Maharaja was quite taken aback. Pleased and ashamed, he showered valuable gifts on Jankibai. The singer stood vindicated- her command of music had overshadowed her looks.

Better known as Chappanchuri, the charismatic Janakibai was born around 1875 at Banaras in Mohallah " Barna Ka Pul". Her father Shivbalak Ram and Mother Manki had three other children besides Janki, two daughters Mahadevi and Avakashi and a son Beniprasad. Shivbalak Ram ran a sweet shop and was also in the business of supplying milk. He was a wrestler of some repute who participated in local wrestling matches.

One evening, after participating in a wrestling match, as Shivbalak strolled along the bank of the Ganga he heard loud cries for help. Sensing the emergency, he jumped into the river and rescued the drowning person. This was a beautiful young woman Laxmi who had jumped into the river with her new-born illegitimate child. The child could not be saved and Shivbalak brought Laxmi home. In due course, she became his second wife. The arrival of Laxmi did not bode well for Manki and her children.



Janakibai

Blinded by the charms of the younger woman Shivbalak began to beat and mistreat them. Little Janki soon developed a deep-rooted hatred for her stepmother.

After a while Laxmi developed an intimate relationship with a police constable named Raghunandan who was a regular at Shivbalak's sweetshop. One day when the rest of the family was away, little Janki happened to see Laxmi and Raghunandan in an unduly intimate position. Though Janki kept mum about the incident, it made Laxmi and Raghunandan uneasy. They feared Janki might tell her parents about their relationship. In a bid to do away with the only witness of their crime, one day Raghunandan sneaked into her home and blindly stabbed Janki with a kitchen knife (Legend has it that Jankibai had fifty-six scars on her body, hence the name Jankibai-Chappanchuri which literally means Jankibai of 56 knife-scars). Taking her for dead, Raghunandan fled the scene of crime. Laxmi raised a big hue and cry to prove her innocence but the truth surfaced soon because Janki, who had been hospitalised, gained consciousness after a while. This made Laxmi nervous, and one day she vanished from Shivbalak's house with all the cash and jewellery. Under intense social and economic pressure due to the on going criminal case against Raghunandan and Janki's hospitalisation Shivbalak left his family and they never saw him again. Manki and her children were left to fend for themselves.

With no real skills and no man to depend on, Manki sought the help of one of her acquaintances and came to Allahabad in search of a job. She little knew that this woman Parvati was a procuress who had tricked her into leaving her home and whatever support network she had. Manki was forced to become a woman of pleasure.

Manki may have been a reluctant practitioner of her new profession but she could sense Janki's talent for music and groomed her accordingly. Janki learnt music from Ustad Hassu Khan of Lucknow and had accomplished saaranginawazs Makhadum Bux and Ghasita and tablaanawazs Miyan Rahimmuddin and Ramlal Bhatt for accompanists. She also learnt English, Sanskrit and Persian from private tutors. Soon after her debut at a mehfil at music connoisseur Ramchandra Dass' soiree, her fame as a talented new singer spread and she began to receive invitations to perform at prestigious mehfils all over the country.

One of the first singers from the Bai stream to break through the 'good looks' barrier, Jankibai was anointed the melody queen by popular choice. Besides fame, she also acquired a number of houses and other properties in and around Allahabad, some of these were gifted to her by her admirers. One example of her popular appeal was her performance in the Atarsuiya locality of Allahabad. It attracted a huge congregation of listeners from all walks of life. It is said that her listeners showered upon her a total of 14070 silver coins. [1]

Jankibai was a clear favourite at the court of Bettiah, Bihar. The Maharaja of Bettiah, an expert Dhruvapada singer himself, called her bulbul (nightingale). She also participated in mehfils in Patna. In 1925, she performed at a mehfil organised on the eve of the wedding of renowned musicologist Barrister Sir Sultan Ahmed's son. Zohra Bai of Agra and Gauharjan of Calcutta also participated in this mehfil. The connoisseurs present felt Jankibai's performance that night had been superior to Gauharjan's .[2]

In 1911, during King George V's visit to Allahabad, a mehfil was organized to showcase the musical heritage of North India. The legendary Gauharjan of Calcutta had also been invited to perform on this occasion. Gauhar's overwhelming presence usually made other singers nervous and most could not perform well. Jankibai took it upon herself to save the pride of Allahabad and performed extremely well. It is said that her performance was far superior to that of Gauharjan's

Gauherjan

at this programme. Jankibai's performance earned her a lot of respect in the government circles and she was immediately provided with armed guards by the local administration for her safety, which was a rare gesture on the part of the government and also a status symbol in those days.[3]) She was also granted an arm license (number 254) for a double barrel gun.

Jankibai's recordings were much sought after by admirers of Hindustani music across the Indian sub-continent and when her records were first played publicly in Allahabad, people thronged the streets. Her public performances were much awaited events and were instrumental in popularizing Hindustani Classical music among the masses in North India.

A competent poet, Jankibai had an anthology "Deewan-e-Janki"(published by Israr-E-Karimi Press, Jansenganj, Allahabad) to her credit. This book is not available now.[4] She regarded herself a disciple of the famous Urdu poet Akbar Allahabadi and used to visit his place to discuss her compositions with him and consult him. Legend has it that during one of her visits to Allahabad Gauharjan met this witty poet through Jankibai. Allahabadi immediately composed a couplet about Gauharjan and recited it for them. The couplet goes :

> "Aaj Akbar kaun hai, duniya me Gauhar ke siwa,
> Sab khuda ne de hai rakha, ek shauhar ke siwa!"
> (Who in this world is more famous than Gauhar?
> God granted her everything but a husband.)

At the peak of her career, Jankibai fell in love with a handsome lawyer, Sheikh Abdul Haq. Haq was already married and had two children. Ignoring the warnings and advice of her well-wishers, Jankibai married the lawyer. As expected, her marriage did not bring her happiness and ultimately, resulted in separation. The apparent cause of discord was Jankibai's deep love for her adopted son Aziz alias Bachcha. Bachcha turned a drug addict and Jankibai blamed her husband for it. She also suspected that while she was out of station to perform, Haq did not take due care of Bachcha.

After her separation from Sheikh Abdul Haq, Jankibai established a trust with the help of her counsel Hashmatullah Saheb of Rajapur, Allahabad to protect her properties. This trust, known today as "The Jankibai Trust", is registered with the Sunni Central Board of Waqfs, U.P. at Lucknow and was constituted on 14th August 1921. Initially Jankibai herself managed the activities of this trust with the help of Hashmatullah. Later, she made a will to the effect that after her death the trust be managed by a committee comprising of two Sunni Muslim members, one Shia Muslim member and one member each from the Hindu Kayastha and Bengali communities. As per the terms and conditions of the Trust, the senior among Sunni members would act as its Manager (Mutawalli), and shall take decisions in consultation with other members of the Trust. Shri Devendra Nath Srivastava and Shri Gopal Das Mukherjee were the Kayastha and Bengali members of the

Trust. After Hashmatullah, his son Rahmatullah remained its member for a very long time and now, his grandson Syed Mohammed Aamir is one of the Trust members. The income generated from the properties of the Trust are used to fulfill its objectives of providing financial help to poor and needy students, meals to Brahmins, charity during pitra-paksha, (a two week long Hindu festival dedicated to the ancestors), distribution of blankets among the poor in winter, running free-kitchen (langar) during the month of Moharrum and arranging Iftar (ritual breaking of fast by fasting muslims) during the month of Ramazan.

As she advanced in years, Jankibai began to suffer from asthma and became a recluse. The nightingale who once enthralled millions of music lovers died unsung on 18th May 1934. Her funeral was a quite affair, some admirers buried her at Kala Danda cemetery situated about 4 Km. from Allahabad Railway Station.

Jankibai had a summer home at Mehandori (Rasoolabad) at the bank of the Ganga. Rest of the year, she lived at her spacious house at Sabzi Mandi. This house had a big drawing room, a mujra-ghar (dance hall), a stable for the horses, and a place to keep the sedan and the coach. Following the custom of the rich and the powerful, within the town she generally travelled by her own coach or sedan. Now rented to several tenants, Jankibai's house is today located between Meer Garadiya's Masjid and Nathu Baniya's shop. The mujra-ghar is now occupied by Haji Mohammed Rafique and the stables by Haji Munnah. The portion, which used to be occupied by Jankibai for personal use, is now rented to Mohammed Qadir.

The well that supplied Jankibai with the water she believed kept her voice sweet, has dried. But her hometown believes and loves to recount the tradition that sometimes, late at night, from the Sabzi Mandi house of Jankibai waft sounds of singing and the soft jingle of ghungroos. Three quarters of a century after her death, Chappanchuri continues to haunt the collective memory of the town she lived and died in.

Jankibai is known to be one of the first Indian artists to be recorded by a gramophone company. [5] This claim is supported by a photograph printed in "The Music Goes Round (1942)" by Frederick William Gaisberg, the first recording expert who visited India during 1902 to record Indian artists on behalf of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. This photograph was reproduced in an article "Discography of Janki Bai of Allahabad" by Michael Kinnear (The Record News of the Journal of the Society of Indian Record Collectors, Vol.14, April 1994) with the footnote "Vocalist Janki Bai, accompanied by two sarangiyas and a tabliya at a recording session circa 1902". However, her records do not figure on the list of discs recorded during 1902-03 by Frederick William Gaisberg or during 1904-05 by William Sinkler Darby.
(According to available information, Jankibai made her first recordings at Delhi in March 1907 for G&T Ltd. - Ed.)".

The confusion clears somewhat when in another article published in Record News (SIRC) - Vol.-17, Jan 95, Kinnear refers to William Conrad Gaisberg's article in "The Romance of Recording" (THE VOICE). Referring to Jankibai's above referred photograph printed in this article with the caption "Indian Musicians", he states - "This photograph has been wrongly attributed in a number of more recent publications as being a photograph of Miss Gauhar Jan of Calcutta. In this article - the photographs have not been credited directly to Will Gaisberg, and the publication of this photograph of Miss Janki Bai of Allahabad precedes the - The Music Goes Round - Macmillan, New York, 1942.

In "The Music Goes Round", the photograph - (facing page 58) is correctly identified as being of - "Janki Bai with Indian musicians, in a pause during a recording

Janki Bai with Indian musicians

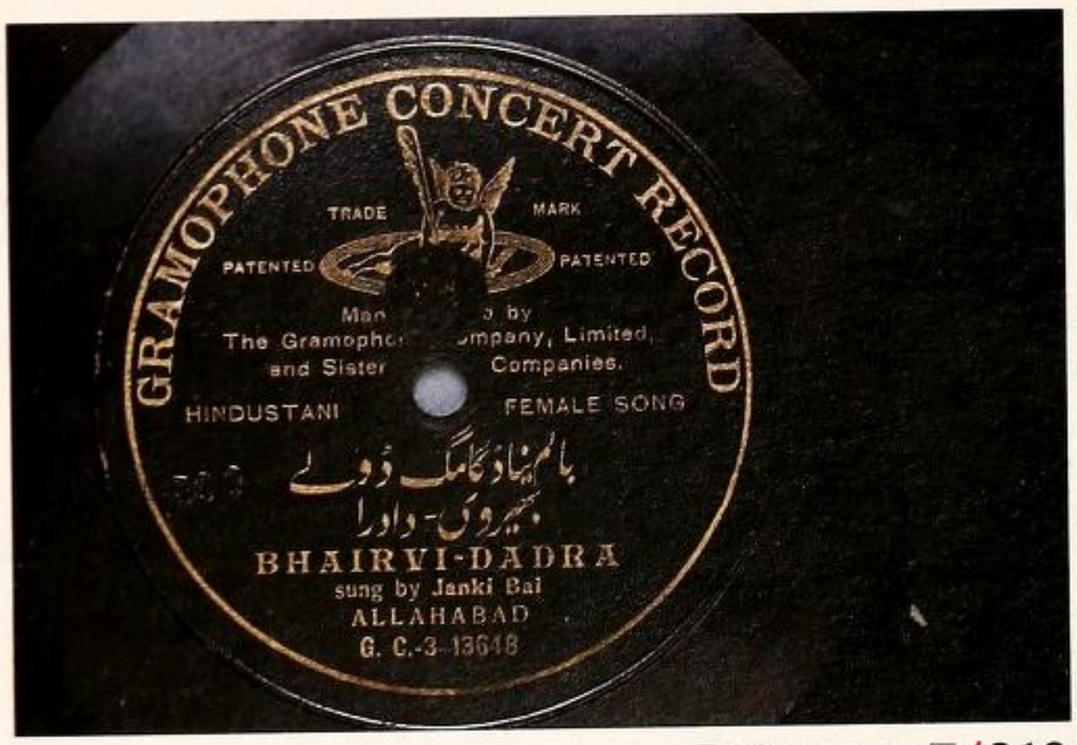
session at Calcutta" - with the credit being given to Arthur Clarke as Photographer. Most of Janki Bai's recordings feature harmonium in the background though a few do have sarangi in the background. The use of two sarangis as background can clearly be heard in some of the recordings done by Arthur Spottiswoode Clarke at Calcutta during Jan 1915, so this photograph may be authenticated to that date. (Janki Bai - Discography - The Record News - 14, April 1994, page 31).

The confusion over the identity of the "Janki Bai" photograph rose simply because Fred Gaisberg referred to her in his book (page 57) and readers have presumed that he recorded Jankibai during his recording sessions at Calcutta in 1902. He did not.

Curiously, the photograph "Goura Jan" included in "The Music Goes Round" (opposite page 56) is credited to Fred Gaisberg as 'Photograph by the Author'; while the English edition of the same book "Music on Record" (Robert Hale Limited, London, 1947) credits the same photograph (facing page 56) to Arthur Clarke.

Fred Gaisberg had recorded Gauhar Jan at Calcutta in December 1902 and again in April 1908. Arthur Spottiswoode Clarke had also recorded Gauhar Jan at Calcutta in December 1912, so the actual dating of the photograph could have been at any one of the three dates."

It stands to reason then that Jankibai was first recorded during the 1906-07 recording session of William Conrad Gaisberg. Her first recorded performance (record number GC-3-13616) was a ghazal dadra with the lyrics "Mere Haal-E-Zaar Ki Aye Buton Tumheen Kya Kisi Ko Khabar Nahin". During this session Gaisberg made 22 recordings with Jankibai but only 21 of them (record numbers GC-3-13616 to 13622 , GC-3-13639 to 13651 and GC-3-13716) were released. Most of these records contained Hindustani songs like ghazal, dadra and qawwali. One record (record number GC-3-13651) was a




Several Records by Janki Bai

Janki Bai: Gramophone Concert Record

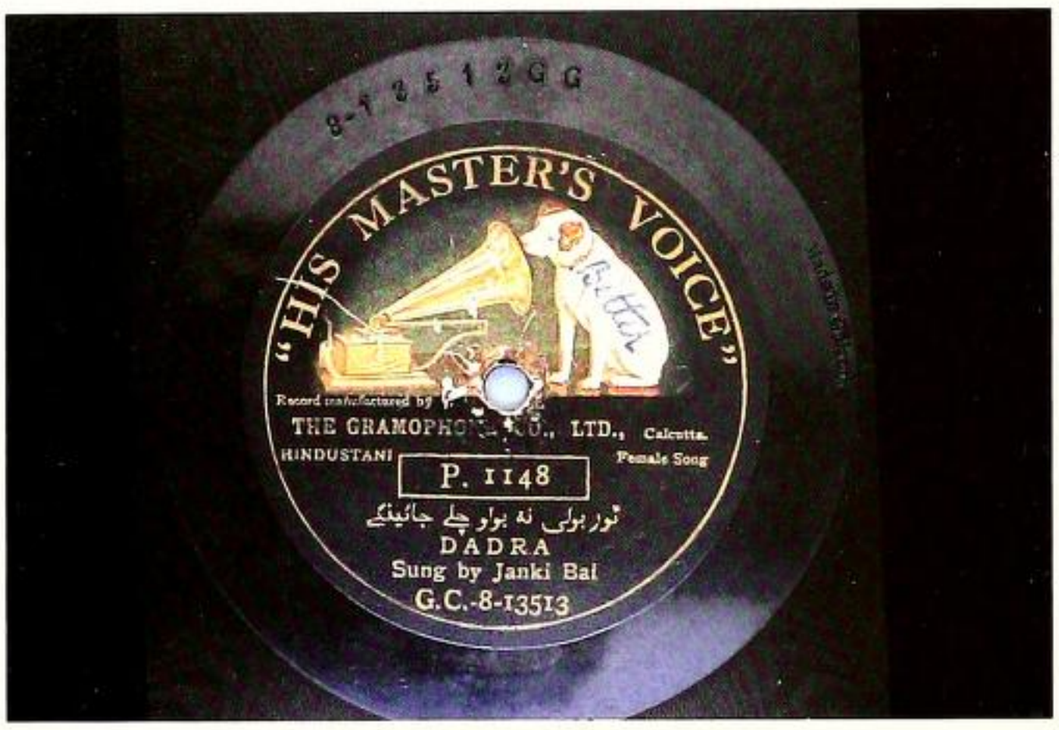
Persian song with the lyrics "Dar Kharabat-e-mughan Noor-e-Khuda mee Beeman".

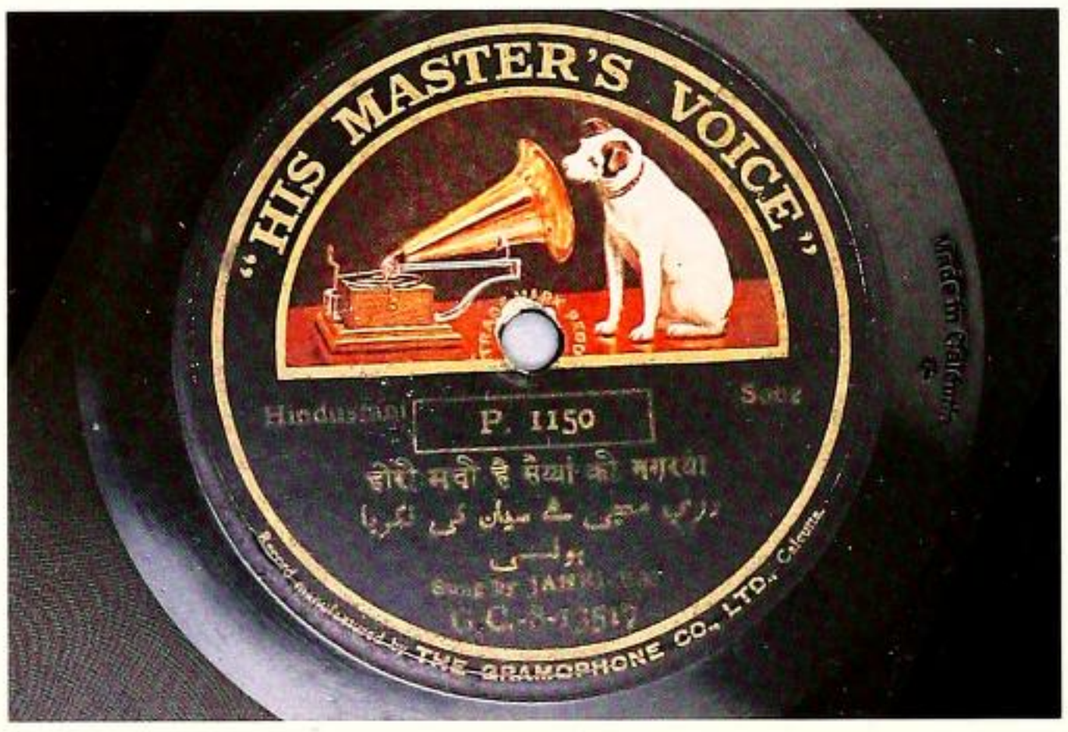
About Janki's fee for performance F.W. Gaisberg wrote: "Janki Bai was one of the best classical singers and her fee was 3,000 rupees for a recording session. To attend a wedding celebration her fee varied with the standing of the parties; from a wealthy family she would get 5,000 rupees, and the festival on such an occasion would last several days. Dulari was another popular female artist, much more adaptable than Janki Bai though not so good a classical singer."("The Music Goes Round" /The Macmillan Company 1942, New York)

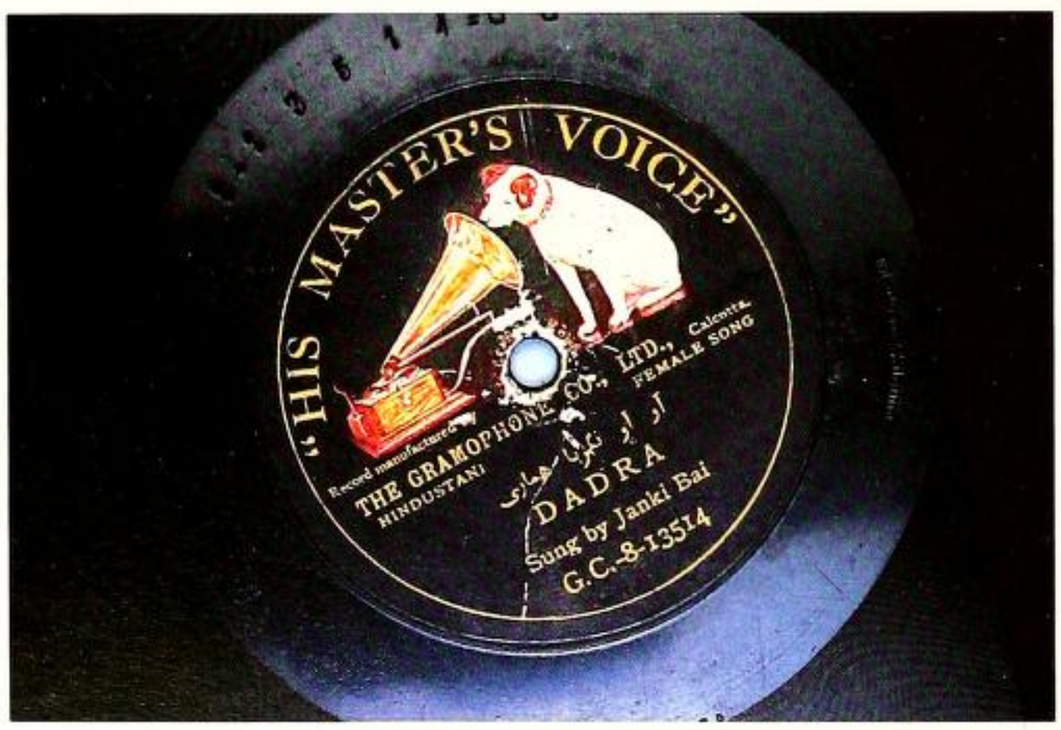
She was well aware of her indispensability and following the old adage of one bird in hand being better than two in the bush, she demanded and got her fee in cash as G. W. Dillnut learnt after he witnessed his principal's efforts at trying to coax her into accepting an exclusive agreement: "The Gramophone Company Ltd., had been negotiating with Miss Janki Bai for some time, hoping to place her under 'exclusive' contract with the company, a proposal that she had consistently declined, preferring to provide her recordings for cash payments only. Mohamed Aslam Saife had recently secured a large number of recordings of Miss Janki Bai for issue on the 'Pathe' label, thus faced with the situation, The Gramophone Company Ltd., could do little except concede to paying her how ever much she asked of them." (The Gramophone Company's Indian Recordings 1908-1910/ Michael S. Kinnear)

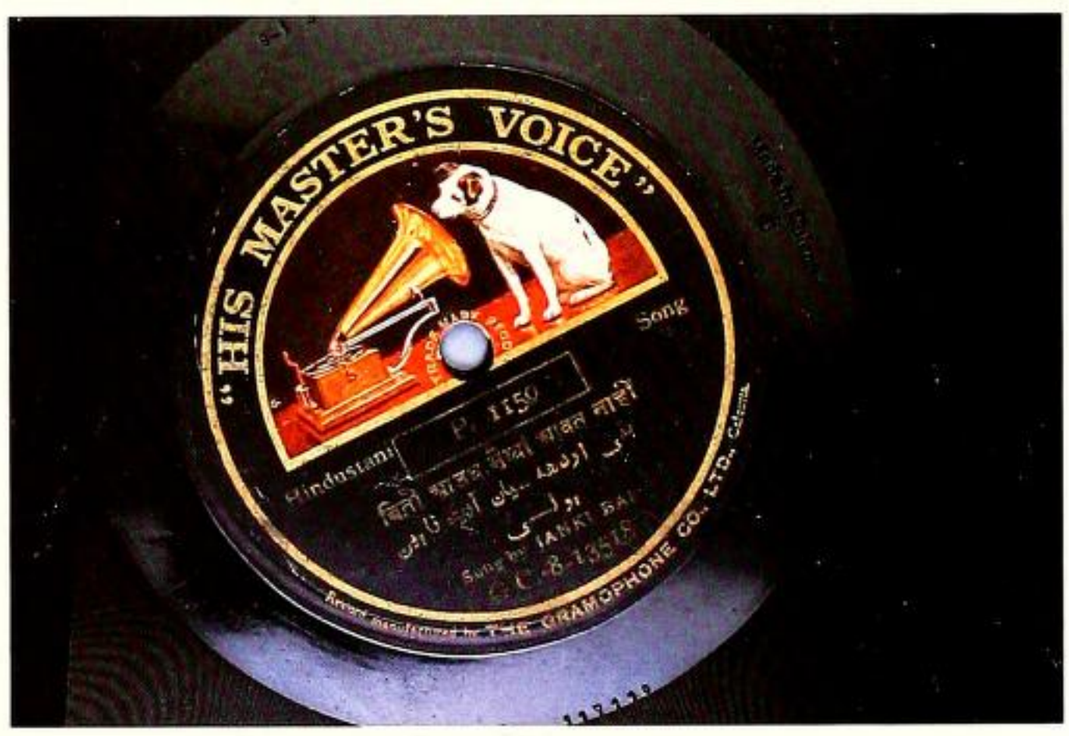
George Walter Dillnutt recorded 25 songs (record numbers GC-8-13141 to GC-8-13165) including chaiti, kajri, dadra, bhajan, ghazal and thumri by Jankibai for The Gramophone Company Ltd. at Calcutta between 20th October and 16th December 1908. "Shri Ramchandra kripalu bhaj man" her favourite bhajan sung in Bhairavi (record no. GC- 8-13158) proved to be

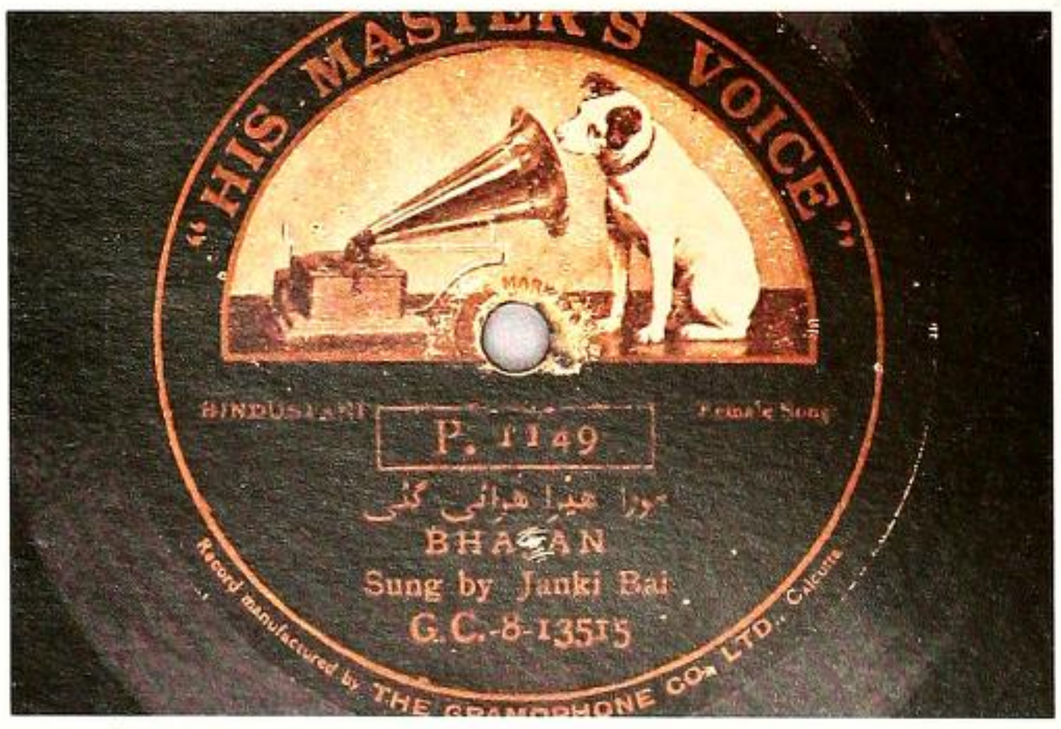
Records by Janki Bai



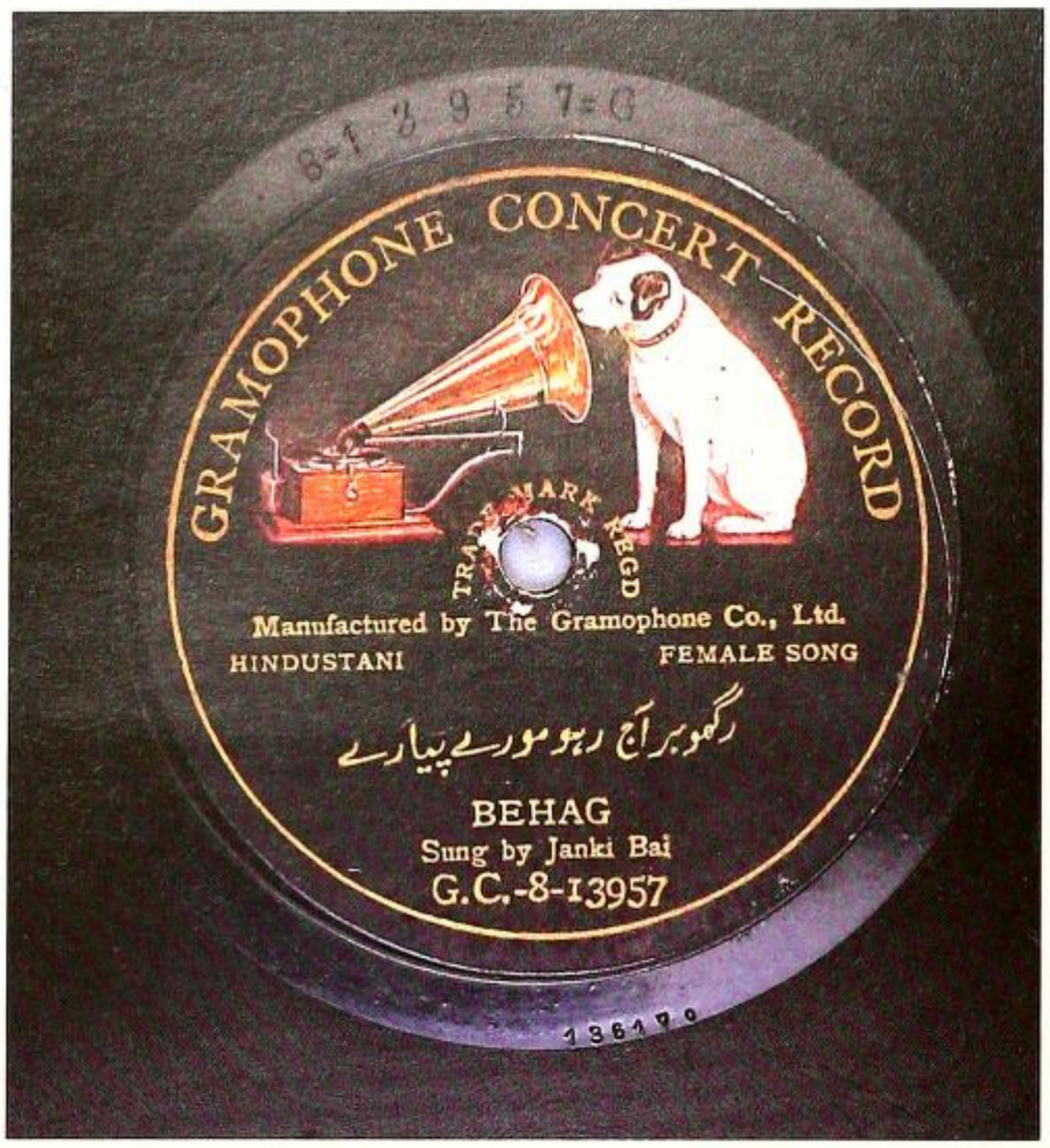



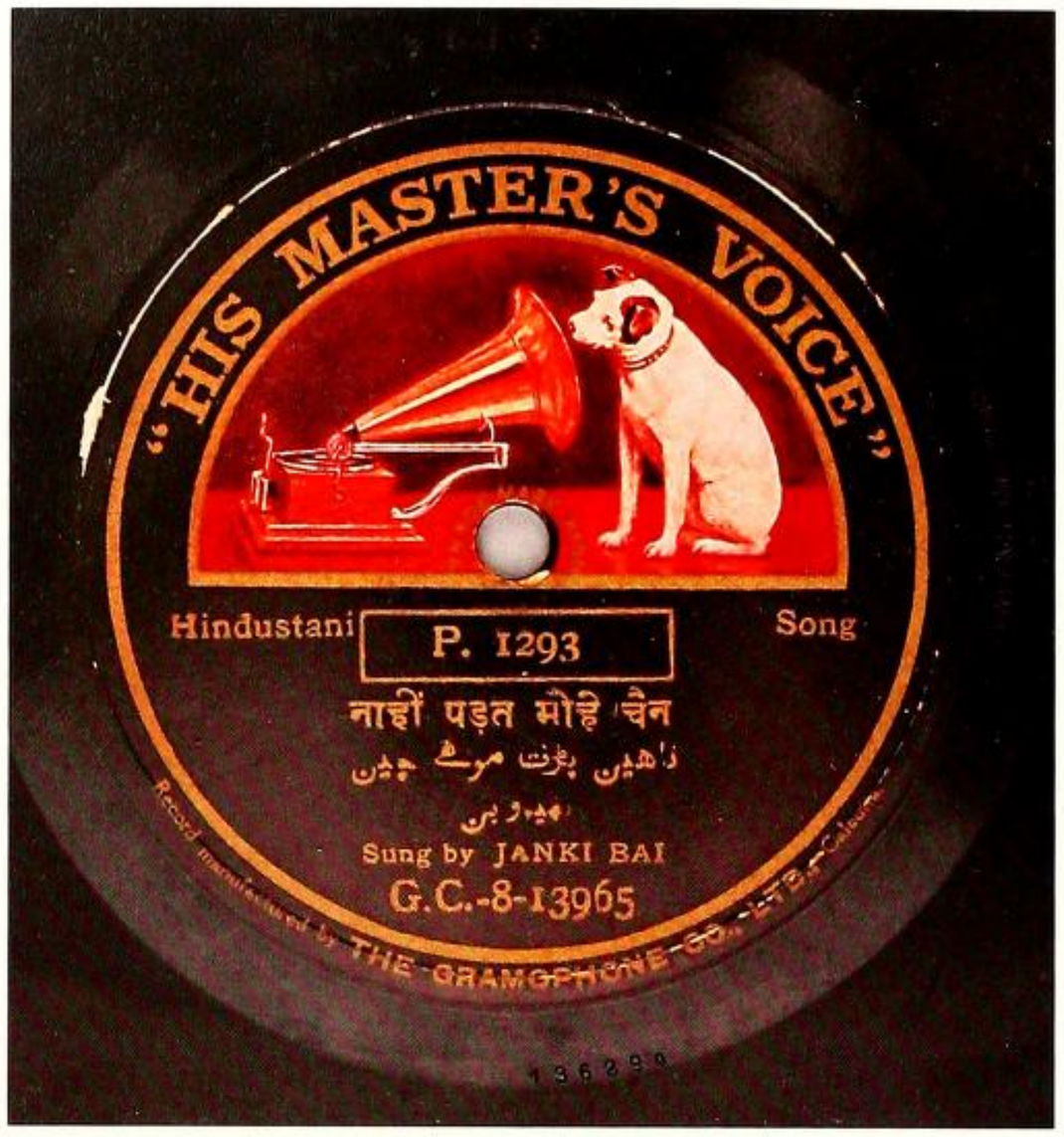



Several Records by Janki Bai

quite a hit. Another song "Maza Lele Rasiya Nayee Jhulni Ka ; Tohe Baantu Jag Mein Jawani Sanwar Goriya ; Das Gunde Aage Chalein, Das Gunde Pachhwan ; Bitchwa Mein Challailun Sanwar Goriya." (record number GC-8-13147) also became very popular.

On 11th and 12th November, 1909, Dillnutt recorded Jankibai at Delhi (record numbers GC-8-13512 to GC-8-13522 ; GC-8-13531 to GC-8-13540 and GC-8-13411). The Persian songs are, "Aala Ya Aaeevo-hasako Aadia Kasaun Va Navalha" (record number GC-8-13531) and " Kafire Ishkam Musalmani Mara Darkar Nist" (record

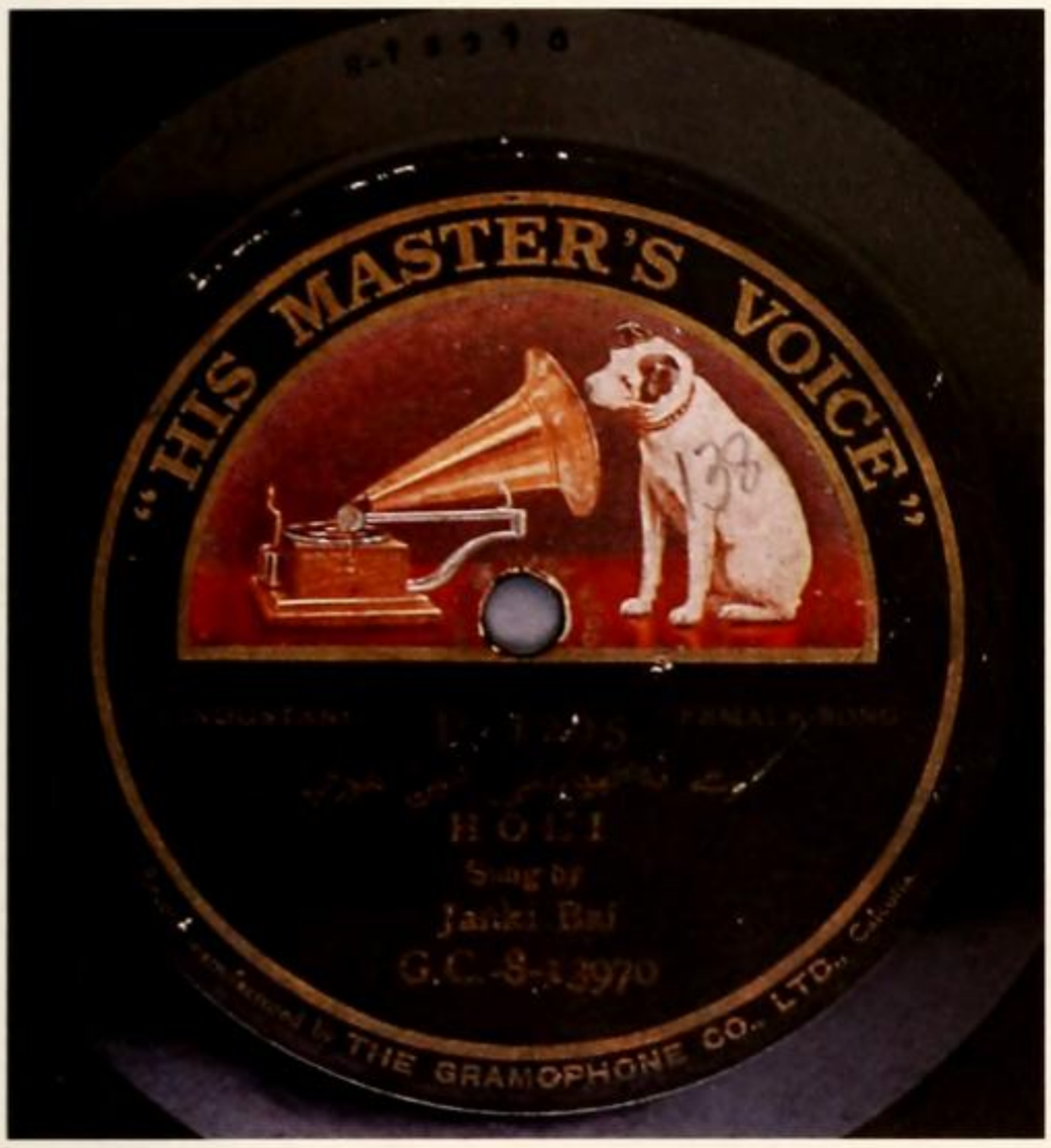


Records by Janki Bai

number GC-8-13532). From this series her songs " Saiyan Nikal Gaye, Main Na Ladi Thee, Ish Nagri Ke Dash Darwaje; Na Jane Kaun Si Khidki Khulee Thee, Saiyan Nikal Gaye Main Na Ladi Thee" (record number GC-8-13516), and "Ehi Thaien Jhulanee Heray Gaili Daiya Re" (record number GC-8-13540) were extremely popular numbers and continue to be rendered again and again in different genres.

In 1910 too George Walter Dillnutt recorded 22 Hindustani songs of Jankibai at Delhi on 17th and 18th November. Only 21 of these (record numbers GC-8-13957 to GC-8-13973 and GC-8-13975 to GC-8-13977) were released. From this series her Bhairavi song" Naahin Padat Mohe Chain" (record number



GC-8-13965) was a great success. Two records from this session (record numbers X-3-103049 and X-3-103268) were issued under the Zonophone label.

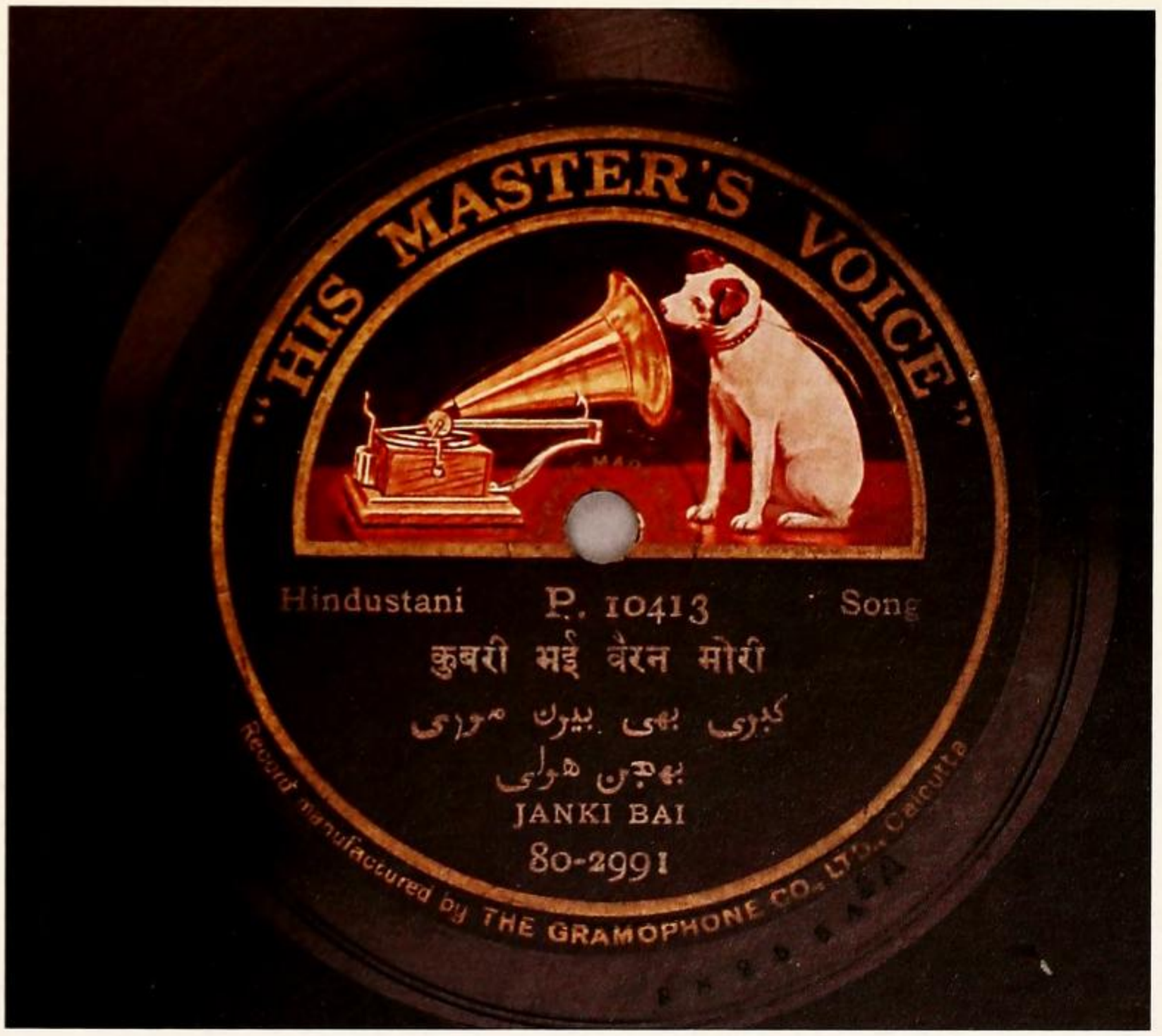
The Gramophone Co. Ltd. continued to record Jankibai until 1929. In 1911, Max Hampe recorded 20 songs with her. Her Dadra songs "Phool Gendwa Na Maro" (record number GC-9-13361) and "Rangde Gulabi Mori Sadi Rangrejwa" (record number GC-9-13373) remained in great demand for a very long time. She was recorded by Arthur Spottishwoode Clarke at Calcutta (1915), by George Walter Dillnutt at Allahabad (1916), by Robert Edward Beckett at Lucknow (1922 and 1928) and by Arthur James

Records by Janki Bai

Janki Bai : "His Master's Voice"

Twine at Delhi(1929). Unlike her earlier recordings which were made by the acoustic method, her 1928 recordings by Robert Edward Beckett were her first recordings made using the electric recording method. Some of her extremely popular and sought after numbers released as a consequence of these recording sessions were: "Yeh Jalsa Tajposhi Ka Mubarak Ho" (record number - 12-13299); "Tum Hi Kufr Ho Aur Iman Tumhi Ho" (record number - 12-13297); " Kya Tumne Dil Liya Nahin Jawab Do" (record number - 12-13617); " Mori Dard Hi Na Jani Ganwar" (record number - 13-13560); "Dagar Na Jani Jaibo

Janki Bai : "His Master's Voice"

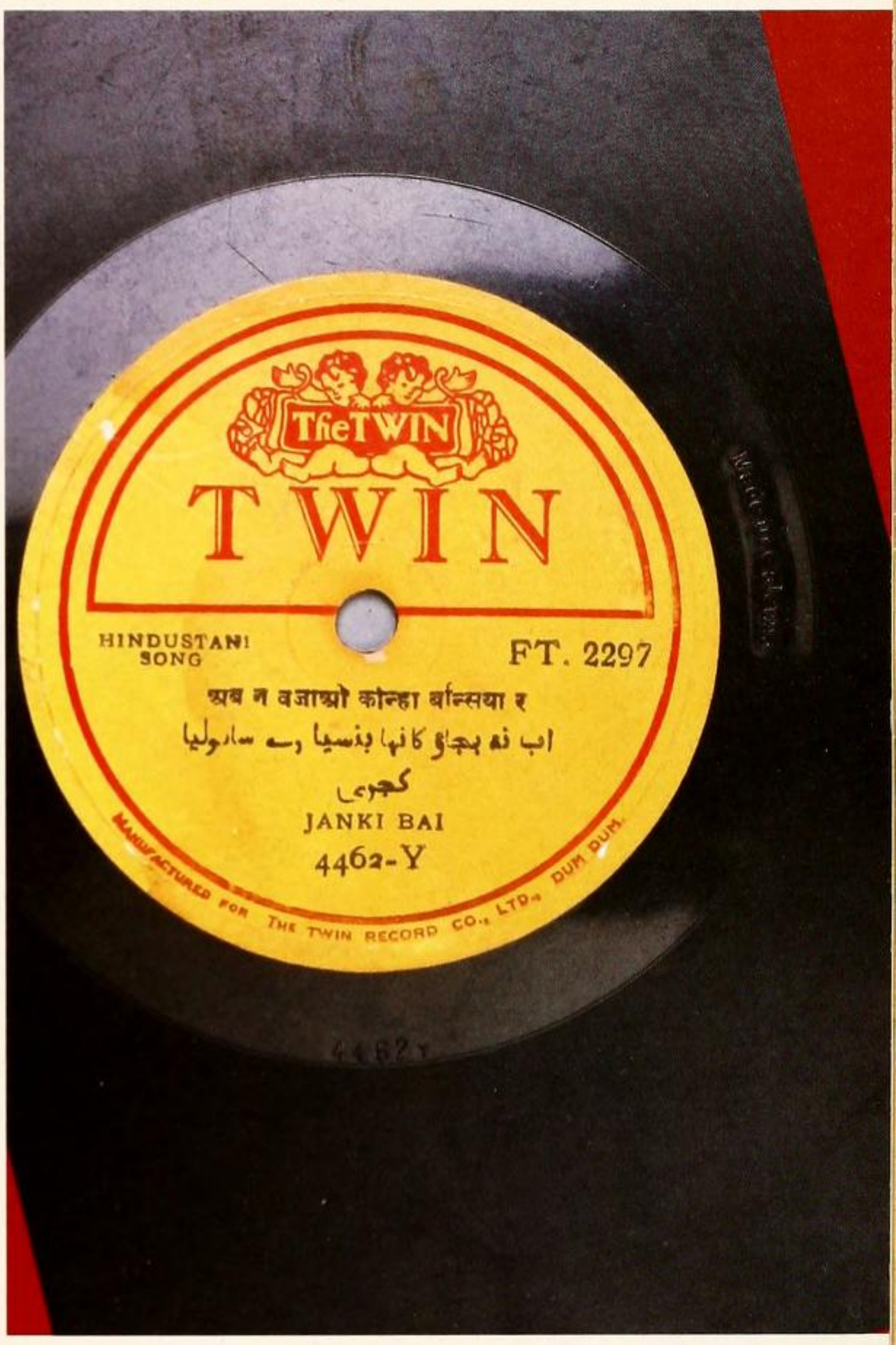



Kaise" (record number - 80-1508); "Nabi Ji Tham Lo Mori Baiyaan" (record number - 19-13735); "Raam Kare Kahin Naina Na Uljhe" (record number - 80-4409); "Ek Kafir Par Tabiyata Aa Gayee" (record number - 80-3238).

About Jankibai's Pathe recordings, Kinnear writes- "Although Jankibai is reported to have given, 60 to 70 recordings to The Pathephone and Cinema Co., Calcutta, (combining both the 1908 and 1911 recordings) - not one example of these "Disque Pathe" 11" vertical cut discs (which play from the inside track to the outer edge) - have been located

Miss Janki Bai :
Disque Pathe

- neither has any catalogue or listing of the discs come to light- so we are unable to report of the repertoire that was recorded - nor to assess the artistic merit of these recordings - which because of their rarity must rank amongst the most sought after discs by collectors of Jankibai's recordings. Until further information comes to light we might presume that the 1911 recordings of Jankibai for "Disque Pathe" were issued in the 43,000 to 46,000, numerical series and may also have been issued labeled as "PATHE-PHONE" discs" (Record News, Vol-14, April 1994). Kinnear's presumption in this regard comes true. Two such rare records, issued by "Disque Pathe": a Dadra "Jara Sach Nahin Kahna Re" (record number 45233) and a Thumri - Asaori "Kaise Ki Bhar Laun Mahwa" (record number 45234), have come to light. These records of Jankibai issued by Pathe Company show the label name as 'PATHE PHONO CINEMA CHINE" and not 'PATHE-




Janki Bai : The Twin

PHONE discs" as presumed by Kinnear.

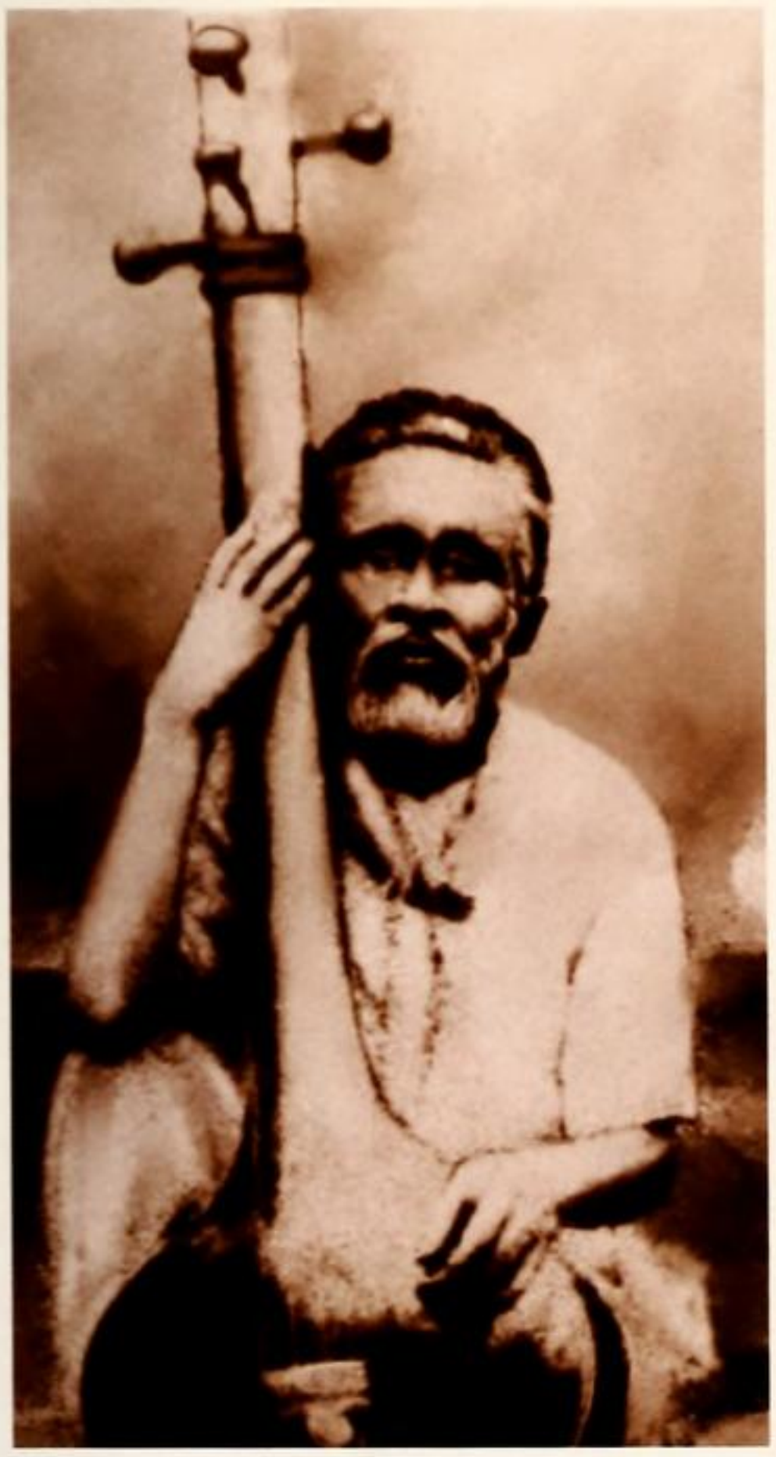
Other Pathe records of Jankibai to have surfaced in recent years are:

Holi "Rangrezwa Chunar Mori Rangde" (record number 45251); Bhajan/Bhairavi- "Malan Jagta Gur Seev" (record number 45250); Dadra- "Mera Dil Tumne Liya" (record number 46967); Theatrical Song- "Do Phool Jani Lelo" (record number 46968) ; Ghazal- "Mere Hale Zar Ki" (record number 45244); Dadra- "Ao Ao Nagariya Hamari" (record number 45243); Dadra- "Gagaria Bharne De Banke Chhaliya" (record number 45254).

Ustad Gauri Shankar Mishra,
Ramjan Khan (next page)
Courtesy: Bibhutisundar Bhattacharya, Kolkata

PATHEPHONE NO."2" 1910

# 7 TWO GREAT OSTADJIS: RAMJAN KHAN AND GAURI SHANKAR



Ramjan Khan Ustadji

The dawn of the 20th Century saw the advent of the sound recording Industry in India. Several European sound recording companies ventured into India to establish their stronghold. Viewing India as a market with a huge potential and promises for their products, they vied with each other to tap this market and monopolize it. While sound recording experts like Frederick William Gaisberg, William Sinkler Darby, George Dillnutt and William Conrad Gaisberg were busy touring and conducting recording sessions of different artists in different parts of India for The Gramophone and Typewrite Ltd., other experts representing other companies too were busy chalking-out recording strategies for their principals. Their main concern was to identify and record yet unrecorded artists whose musical abilities could translate into big profits. In this pursuit of profit, they rendered yeomen service to the world of Indian music by recording some great artists who had so far been overlooked by other recording companies. Two such stalwarts and great teachers of music were Ramjan Khan and Gauri Shankar Mishra, both respectfully called 'Ostadji'.

The renowned Tappa singer, Ostad Ramjan Khan was the son of the well-known Tappa Singer Imam Bandi of Calcutta. It is said that a large number of musicians accompanied the deposed Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Oudh, when he was exiled to Metiyaburj, Calcutta. It were they, who propagated this form of Tappa in Calcutta.[1]

Ramjan Khan, a dedicated follower of the style of Tappa gayaki of Ghulam Nabi alias Shori Miyan, was a very popular artist as well as a generous teacher of his day. Shori Miyan, was the son of the famous Dhruvapada, Dhamar and Khayal singer Ghulam Rasool, who was also the Court musician of Nawab Asaf-ud-daula of Lucknow (1775-1797). Ghulam Rasool tried hard to train his son in Dhruvapada and Khayal gayaki but Ghulam Nabi's voice was thin and not suited to Khayal Gayaki. One day the frustrated father reprimanded the son so harshly that Ghulam Nabi left home vowing not to return till he gained mastery over music. Wandering in search of a style more suited to his voice Ghulam Nabi

NICOLE RECORD
NICOLE
RECORD
TRADE MARK REGD.
PATENTED.
Bengali Song
কেন জপনা মন কালী অন্তরে
মাহার—কাওয়ালী।
ROMJAN KHAN OSTADJI
CALCUTTA.
C 7.

reached the rural areas of Multan (now in Pakistan). Here, he heard the camel drivers singing songs full of hopping notes synchronous to the sound of camel-carts. These songs, known as Tappa, had a magnetic attraction for Ghulam Nabi who studied this enchanting style and gave it a new orientation. He moulded the rural and raw Tappa by introducing delicate and refined elements of ragas like Bhairavi, Khamaj, Tailanga, Kafi and Sindura and further embellished it with beautiful meandering taans. This innovative style won Ghulam Nabi the recognition he craved for. He adopted "Shori" as his nom-de-plume in his compositions. The tenderness introduced by Shori Miyan also influenced the text of Tappa. According to the 17th Century treatise "Rag Darpan" authored by Faqueerullah, the early Tappa texts were about sorcery and death. Today love and romance form the core of Tappa. Though romantic love (Sringara) is the predominant theme, Tappa doesn't have the romantic appeal or the sweet charm of Thumri-Dadra. [2]

The word Tappa is derived from the Punjabi 'tup' which means to jump, to leap or to spring forward. True to its name, the Tappa style of singing is marked by a constant hopping from note to note. According to musicologist M.R. Gautam, the main features of this style of singing include mainly brisk but crisp and precise rendering of the composition, taking care to see that in the process none of the tonal embellishments of the composition are blurred; a continuous volley of the Zamzama pattern of tana, combinations of difficult and odd notes as far as possible, use and performance of plavita-gamaka

Kalipado Pathak
under Senola Record

Gauri Shankar and Shama : Disque Pathe Record

recordists Stephen Carl Porter and John Watson Hawd recorded Ostad Ramjan Khan. By this time two of its Directors, George Burt and Carl Krieger, had already secured a patent for the process of manufacture of disc records by using compressed card-boards with celluloid coating.

These early Nicole records are single sided and fragile. Only three rare recorded numbers of Ostadji ,"Sahana Qawali", with the lyrics "Keno Japona Mon Kali Boley" (record number C - 7), "Tappa-Piloo", with the lyrics "Ajman Bas Gaye" (record number C - 158), and that of Raga Sindhu (record number C - 91) perhaps are all that is left of this artist's rich repertoire.

A renowned Sarangiya, a noted vocalist, Ostadji Gauri Shankar Mishra (1867-1945) was also a regular accompanist of the legendary Miss Gauharjan of Calcutta.. He came from a family with a long and rich musical tradition. His father Bechu Mishra alias Bechu Ostad too was a well-known Sarangiya, a renowned vocalist and one of Gauharjan's teachers. Bechu Mishra was the son of Buddhu Mishra of Banaras and was married to the daughter of Shri Manohar Prasadji. In search of better opportunities, he migrated to Calcutta and settled at 158, Balaram Dey Street. Two of his sons, Shyamaji Mishra and Bundi Mishra were famous Tabla players whereas Kankarji Mishra and Kali Prasad Mishra were established Sarangi players.

with considerable alacrity i.e. jumping from one note to another while omitting a few intermediary notes, fast phrasing usually to be done in one breath which therefore is not very long and is normally of one or two durations, prohibition of use of the tanas of the khayal style and no respite to the singer. Once the singer begins a composition he or she cannot dwell on any note, but has to keep on improving in the manner detailed above. Tappa therefore, has an extremely strenuous and difficult style. It requires extraordinary command over the swaras and talas. It is in a way an acrobatic style.

Ostad Ramjan Khan made great efforts for the dissemination and propagation of Tappa and trained a large number of disciples including the renowned Kalipada Pathak of Calcutta, Nagendra Nath Bhattacharjee, Nikunja Bihari Pathak and Phani Shankar Mukherjee.

In 1904-05 Nicole Record Company Ltd. had not released any record of Ostad Gauri Shankar. In his book 'Nicole Record- A Discography' Michael Kinnear has reported three records of the Ostad released by the Nicole Company. They are single sided record numbers C-19-x of Piloo Khambaj (Bangla); C-136-x of Kafipilu-Dheema Tritala, "Najuk Banki Kamariya" (Hindustani); and C-140-x of Khemta, " Aaj Keno Bodhu Adharo Kone" (Bangla).

However, in the recent past, two more records of the Ostad have come to light. They are-Nicole single sided record numbers C-63 of Raga Kedara (Hindustani)

Gauri Shankar and Shama: Disque Pathe Record

and C-59 of Raga Pahari (Hindustani).
These records were based on recordings made at Calcutta during 1904-05 by Stephen Carl Porter and John Watson Hawd, recording experts of the Nicole Record Company Ltd. London. The non-availability of the complete catalogue of the Indian recordings of Nicole Records makes it difficult to say with any certainty whether the company released only these five Nicole Records of the Ostad. Nevertheless, these records definitely prove the Ostadji's command over Bangla.

Ostadji's Sarangee recordings appeared under Megaphone record label MOE 3523 (Bhairobi) and MOE 3522(Khambaj Dadra).

Unlike Ostadji Ramjan Khan Saheb, Gaurishankar did record some Sarangee renderings with the Pathe Company too. Again, for want of the complete catalogue of releases by Pathe Phono Cinema Chine of Paris, it is difficult to say exactly how many records of Ostad Gaurishankar were released by Pathe but Pathe record numbers 46188(Mosay Barjore Kare), 46189(Lagee Moree Bindee), 46190(Jagoray Nindiya) and 46191(Nindiya Akayly) are four rare documents of his wizardry on Sarangee. His Tabla accompanist for these renderings is Shama.

Ostadji remained a great source of inspiration and knowledge for both his students and listeners. Some of his disciples like Miss Indubala and K.C. Dey (blind singer, uncle and teacher of the great Manna Dey) were master performers in their own right who continued their illustrious teacher's tradition.

Lucknow: Asifi Masjid
A view from Imambara

VICTOR “V" TALKING MACHINE,1909

# 8 KHURSHEED ALI KHAN, THE LAST GIANT OF LUCKNOW

Sadiq Ali Khan

Ustad Khursheed Ali Khan (1845* - 1950), was one of the last representatives of the old Lucknow gharana. His style was a rare synthesis of the key musical elements of both the new and the old Lucknow gharanas. His century-long life span was a crucial and turbulent phase in the history of India. This was the period when traditional Indian institutions were beginning to buckle under the twin onslaught of the western model of industrialization and colonization by the British. The arts which till then flourished under the patronage of the feudal rulers and were generally beyond the reach of the plebeians became highly accessible and came to acquire a mass base and orientation thanks to the advent of the printing press and the sound recording industry. With the introduction of talking machines, cinema and radio the institutions of kotha, mehfil and bai began to degenerate. Lucknow, the erstwhile haven of arts and artists, was in a turmoil after the fall of Awadh. Its legendary ruler Nawab Wazid Ali Shah 'Akhtar Piya' was exiled to Calcutta; its chorus of song-birds dispersed. Lucknow's musical heritage and royal patronage allowed vocalists of the Senia gharana like Basit Khan, Pyar Khan, and Jaffar Khan and kathak dancers like Thakur Prasad, Durga Prasad, Bindadin Maharaj and Kalka Prasad to achieve rare heights in their fields; thumri acquired her grace and beauty at the hand of Ustad Sadiq Ali Khan; and musical forms like sozkhwani, marsia, masnavis and qawwali became respectable. With this backdrop Ustad Khursheed Ali Khan emerged as a unique combination of the finest traditions of the music of Lucknow and Lucknowi culture at its best.

Khursheed Ali Khan was the favourite disciple of the most outstanding and versatile musician of Lucknow, Ustad Sadiq Ali Khan (1800 to 1910) of the Qawwal Bachhe gharana of khayal. Both the teacher and disciple inherited the rich musical tradition of illustrious gharana of musicians like Ustad Haidar Khan, Ustad Sahet Khan and Ustad Pyar Khan. Sadiq Ali

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** The year of birth of Ustad Khursheed Ali Khan has been indicated by Dr. Susheela Misra as 1845 (Page-70, 'Musical Heritage of Lucknow'), 1852 by Shri S.K. Chaubey (Page-38, 'Musicians I have met') and 1835 by Shri Madanlal Vyas ('Lupt Hota Lucknow Ka Qawwal Bachha Gharana, Chhaya Nat-104: 5, UPSNA).*

Ustad Khursheed Ali Khan

and Khursheed Ali were cousins: their fathers Raje Khan alias Rajab Ali Khan and Bux Ali Khan were brothers; also, Sadiq Ali Khan was married to Khursheed Ali's elder sister. Being childless Sadiq Ali Khan, a master in the art of rendering dhruvapada, dhamar, tappa, tarana and thumri, adopted Khursheed Ali as his son and so Khursheed Ali became favourite disciple and musical heir of the ustad.

Ustad Sadiq Ali initiated the young Khursheed Ali in khayal gayaki. The talented disciple learnt khayal in the dhruvapada ang and also in the Qawwal Bachhe Gharana style. Khursheed Ali mastered a form of khayal gayaki that possessed a strong frame of dhruvapada ang khayal in the tradition of the great Haddu Khan and Hassu Khan of the Gwalior gharana combining elegance in composition, an artful tempo and playful rendering, the hallmarks of Qawwal Bachhe gharana. Khayal is believed to have originated in Lucknow, flourished under the imperial patronage of Delhi and reached its pinnacle in Gwalior. The void created by its flight from Lucknow was filled by lighter, folksy genres of music like thumri, dadra and ghazal. Despite the growing dominance of thumri and lack of a congenial environment to sustain Khayal gayaki in Lucknow, unlike some of their famous peers Sadiq Ali and Khursheed Ali decided to stay and kept the tradition of Lucknow khayal gayaki alive.

Ustad Sadiq Ali Khan was also a teacher of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah and chances are his favourite disciple Khursheed Ali Khan had a chance to perform (in the company of his teacher) before this great connoisseur of music and dance. Sensing the growing popularity of thumri Ustad Sadiq Ali developed and refined bandish ki thumri. He pioneered the practice of singing thumri in slow tempo, and engineered its transition from the fast rhythmic bol bant style to the early bole banao thumri. His illustrious disciple followed suit.

It is an acknowledged fact that Lucknow thumri contributed immensely to the growth of the Benaras style of thumri and also to its spread to Gaya and Calcutta. This happened when Ustad Sadiq Ali Khan and his disciples Khursheed Ali Khan and Bhaiya Saheb Ganpat Rao frequently travelled between Calcutta and Lucknow to visit the exiled Wajid Ali Shah. It is logical to surmise that their interactions with musicians, resident and visiting, at Metiaburz would result in cross-fertilization of musical genres.

Thus on the one hand, Khursheed Ali Khan preserved the illustrious tradition of khayal gayaki of the Lucknow gharana and on the other, helped the growth and spread of Lucknow thumri. Khan Saheb also mastered soz, marsia and kalam genres typical of Lucknow under the guidance and training of Syed Meer Ali Saheb of Lucknow.

Like a true practitioner, Khursheed Ali Khan also added to his knowledge by participating in various music conferences at Hyderabad, Calcutta, Delhi, Bhopal, Rampur, Bombay and Gwalior and also in the All India Music Conference at Lucknow. He performed at the famous Music Conference at Beerganj, Nepal attended by Ustad Rahmat Khan of Gwalior and Ustad Bande Ali Khan Beenkar and won high praise from his peers. It is said that the doyen of Kirana Gharana Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, tried to emulate his style. Ustad Faiyaz Khan too was a great admirer of this maestro. Khursheed Ali Khan also helped Chatur Pandit Bhatkhandeji in collecting rare old compositions for notation and publication.

Legend has it that when Khursheed Ali Khan sang his favourite khayal in raga Nat Malhar beginning with the words "Allah Nabiji Karam Ki Boonden Barsa Deeje; Karam Ki Boonden Mehar Ke Badal, Begi Mere Piya Se Mila Deeje" it rained. His favourite ragas were Chhayanat, Pooriya, Marwa, Chandrakauns, Adana and some rare varieties of Malhar. The ustad usually sang bandish ki thumri in slow chaachartal; he is also said to have composed many thumris, but as his creations did not con-

tain his name, these cannot be identified now.

Ustad Khursheed Ali Khan trained his son Ustad Iqbal Ali Khan (1901-1980) and grand-daughter Sikandar Jahan in music, his grandson Momin Ali Khan also kept alive his musical legacy in Mumbai. A generous teacher, Khan Saheb also trained a number of noteworthy disciples including Raja Nawab Ali Khan, Bhaiya Saheb Ganpat Rao, Nawab Chaulakhi (Wajid Mirza Bahadur), Pandit Shrikrishna Narain Ratanjankar, Chhote and Bade Aagha of Lucknow, Dr. Prem Bahadur, Mohammadijan, Chhoti Nanhibai, Chhoti and Badi Jaddan, Chinmoy Lahiri and Rabibabu of Calcutta.

With his death on 15th April, 1950, India lost one of its great sons and Lucknow its "Grand Old Man of Music'. It was also a loss in terms of a great treasure of his music as hardly any records of this great musician exist today. And this is a pity considering his death in 1950 almost coincided with half a century of the presence of the sound recording industry in India. So far, only one rare record (record No.-20701; one sided) of this great master which was pressed in Germany for Beka Grand Company has been spotted. This record preserves Ustad Khursheed Ali Khan's rendition of Khayal with the bole "Baharain" in the late night raga Adana. The most prominent swar (vadi) of Adana are said to be 'Sa' and next prominent swar (Samvadi) is 'Pa'. The musical analysis and notation of his rendition indicate that 'Sa' has been used time and again at a stretch and the khayal has been presented in 'madhya laya-ektaal' with melodiousness of meend and pukar. Pronunciations in the recording are not very clear as the record is almost a hundred years old and the recording techniques as well as gadgets were not as advanced as they are today. Further in this performance the Ustad has presented sthai, the melodic bundle of the raga, followed immediately with the antara, ascending to tar 'sa' in a manner peculiar to the raga, going further higher into the upper octave, then descending to link it with the sthai again. For improvisation he has used bol-alap, akar-tan, phirat-tan and bol-bant; and has played with the words, especially with the mukhra (the first phrase of the sthai). One specialty of his rendering is that he has stroked at one note (swar) frequently in "cheez" as well as alap and tana, which is exemplified by the use of 'ma "pa-pa-pa" ma-ga-ma. The tans and the bol-tans are very picturesque.

This record carries the name of the distributor: "Stanley Oakes & Co., Calcutta, Madras, Rangoon, Colombo." In "The 78 R.P.M. Record labels of India" Michael Kinnear writes: “The first releases of the Indian 'Beka' recordings were catalogued from number 1415 upwards, with about three hundred and thirty titles being entered to the catalogue. In December 1906, a further recording tour of India was organized beginning in Bombay, and then continuing onto Lucknow, Benares and Calcutta after which the recording tour moved onto Rangoon and Burma. Recordings from the second tour were entered to the catalogue at about number 20008, the numerical run of the catalogue numbers having been reorganized into national blocks at the end of 1905(page-23)."

Again, he states in "The Gramophone Company's First Indian Recording", "The trade distribution in India was administered through the Beka Record G.m.b.H.'s British agents, Otto Ruhi, 77 City Road, London. Within a few months, a reshuffle of the Beka Record G.m.b.H's Indian agents revealed that while the Talking Machine and Indian Record Co. retained their sole agency for Western India, Stanley Oakes and Co., 6 Mangoe Lane, Calcutta, had been appointed sole agent for Eastern Bengal and Assam, Madras provinces, United Provinces and Ceylon. Solomon and Co., 271, Dalhousie Street, Rangoon were appointed sole agents for Burma.

The sole agency agreement with Stanely Oakes and Co. was short lived, when in

late 1906, Earnest Lowe, a director of the Beka Record G.m.b.H., travelled to India to restructure the agency agreements in India. As a result of the reorganization,

Khurshaid Ali Khan, Lucknow: Beka Grand Record

# RAGA ADANA

*(Madhya Laya - Ektala)*
***By USTAD KHURSHEED ALI KHAN***

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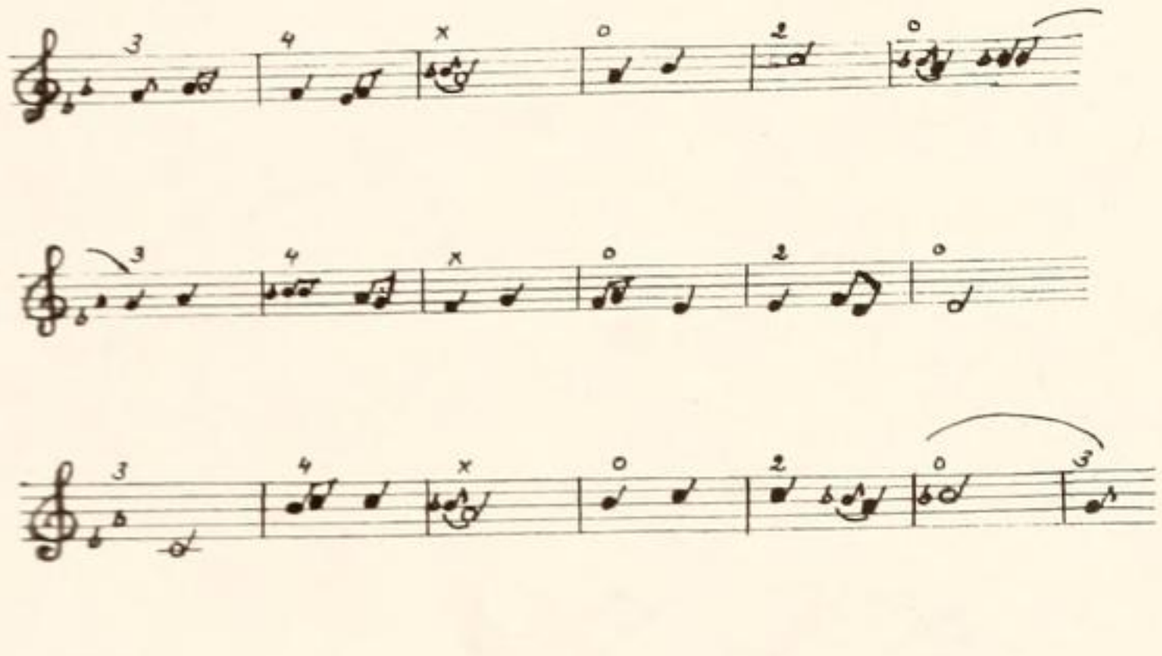
RAGA ADANA

(Madhya Ektala)

Sthai :-



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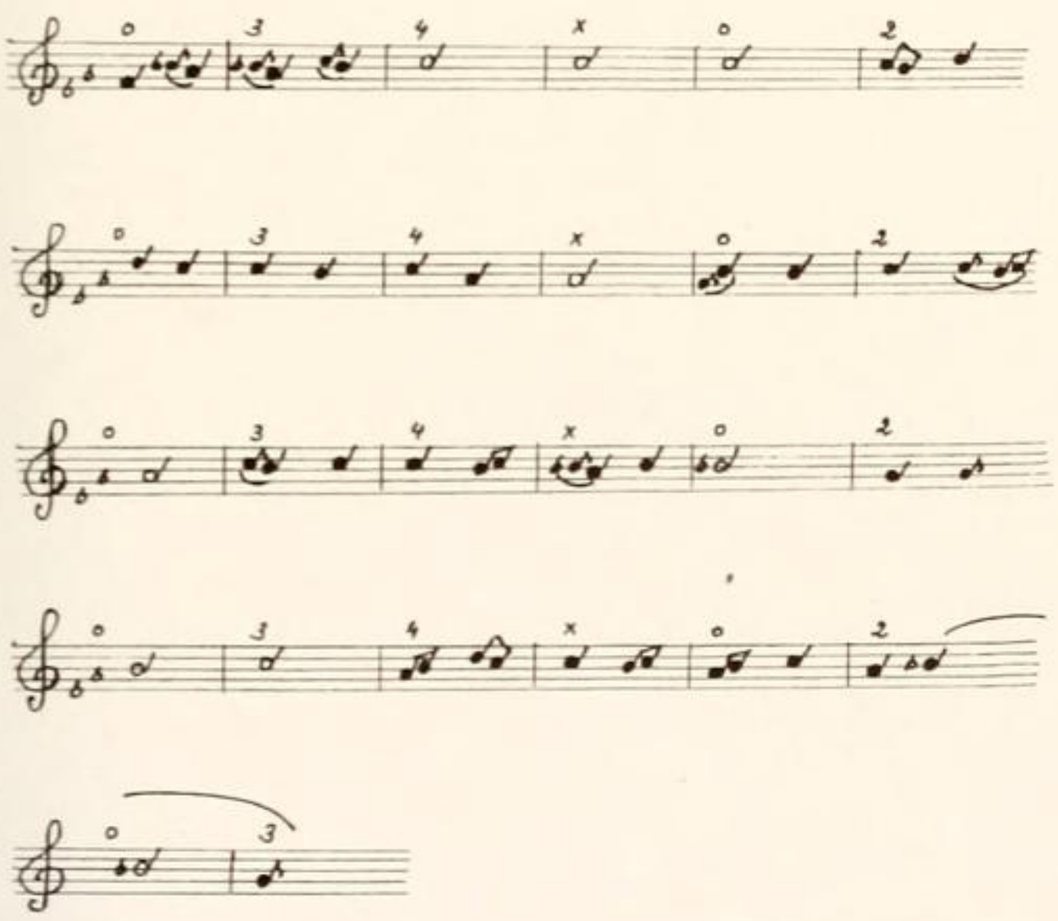

Stanley Oakes and Co. were to remain sole agents for their appointed area for non-Indian repertoire only, and the Talking Machine and Indian Record Co. as the sole monopolists for India, Burma, and Ceylon were to control the Indian repertoire with branch depots in Calcutta, Delhi and Rangoon, Burma (page 45)."

In view of these facts Ustad Khursheed Ali Khan's record is undoubtedly a product of the recording session of December 1906; it is in the 20000 series and it indicates the name of "Stanley Oak and Company" which by late 1906 had ceased to be the sole agents for the Indian repertoire of Beka Record G.m.b.H. Even after he had crossed sixty, the Ustad's voice, as heard in this record, has the mesmeric charm that transports the listener to a by-gone era. The famous Mohammadijan's Khayal gayaki reflects unmistakable shades of Khursheed Ali Khan's gayaki and is her tribute to her great Ustad.

Mohamdi Jan, Lucknow: Beka Grand Record

The Royal Emblem of Dharampur

Courtesy: Dharampur State

DHARAMPUR

सत्यमेव जयते धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः

OLD GRAMOPHONE HMV, 1920

# 9 MAHARANAS OF DHARAMPUR: PATRONS- PANDITS- PERFORMERS

A princely state in pre-independence India, Dharampur, according to the Census of 1941, covered a geographical area of 704 square miles with a population of 1,23,336 and an annual revenue of Rs.15.5 lac. Today, it is a small town located 30 Kms. east of Valsad, in South Gujarat. The serene surroundings of this town situated in the lap of the Sahyadri mountain range cast a sweet spell on visitors. The excellent collection of musical instruments at The Dharampur State Lady Wilson Museum, located here, is a reminder of the rich musical heritage of Dharampur state.

The rulers of this princely state belonged to the legendary Suryavanshi Sisodia Rajput clan of warriors who trace their decent from Lord Ram. According to 'Indian India', 'The State made rapid, progress in all departments of activity during the 28 year reign of the late Ruler H. H. Maharana Shri Mohandevji Narandevji. He headed a deputation of Second Class Rulers of States in the Bombay Presidency to the Governor of Bombay and succeeded in obtaining recognition of the claim of all Rulers of Second Class States who had civil and criminal jurisdiction to be admitted as Members of the Chamber of Princes in their own right. Buildings were a passion with him. Besides the splendid buildings which housed the various schools and hospitals in the capital, he erected a number of palaces, guest houses and temples to Shiva. But the greatest boon he conferred on his subjects was the pucca roads he had constructed linking the capital with many important centers. In the age-old tradition of benevolent Indian rulers he had reservoirs and wells dug, culverts and bridges built all over the state. He thus transformed the hill tribes, nine-tenths of his subjects, into a contented and prosperous peasantry. He displayed remarkable courage and wisdom in his territory at a time when orthodox Hinduism held powerful sway over the minds of the people.

Dharampur Stamp

Development of infrastructure, education, agriculture, industry, health and communication were top priorities but what really made Dharampur stand out was the patronage extended to the arts and music by its rulers. The ruling clan was also blessed with many admirable and illustrious scions who

1- Maharana Mohandevji

2- Maharana Vijaydevji

espoused the cause of music. At least two of its sons- the Late His Highness Maharana Shri Vijaydevji Mohandevji and the Late Kumar Shri Prabhatdevji Narandevji could safely be called great patrons, renowned pundits and acknowledged performers of Hindustani classical music.

Born on 3rd December, 1884, Maharana Vijaydevji succeeded to the throne of Dharampur on 26th March, 1921 after the death of his father H. H. Maharana Shri Mohandevji Narandevji. Vijaydevji followed in the footsteps of his illustrious father as far the administration of the principality was concerned; however, music got a devoted practitioner in his person, his musical inclination manifested itself in the form of two monumental volumes on Indian Music- Sangit Bhava. This work was translated into more than one European languages. Being an established authority on Indian classical music, Vijaydevji received numerous invitations to various conferences, seminars and convocations on music. His deep insight, progressive outlook and futuristic vision for the amalgamation and consolidation of various fractions and fragments of Indian Classical Music into one synchronous structure is expressed in the key note addresses he made on such occasions. While delivering the presidential address at the inaugural gathering of Shree Gujrat Sangit Mahamandal on 21st December, 1935, he said: "Despite the high ambitions of our musicians in India, the petty squabbles and differences of opinion, of minute niceties and petty jealousies among them, prevent sound practical solution of the manifold problems of music which confront them. When the aim is the same, when everyone wants to develop Indian music, when the difference of opinion is only about the means of attaining the same goal; it is essential and I believe more than probable that we should all stand shoulder to shoulder and push music to the highest height of achievement it claims. May I suggest that our pride in the "Gharana" or "Bani" or similar peculiarities of style or composition which we inherit from our Gurus must not become the subject or excuse for innumerable, bitter and futile controversies. They must be accepted and

recognised as so many rich sources of inspiration for the present progress of Hindustani music. They must help us to classify and solve the innumerable problems of music, systematically and scientifically.

We must also adopt the same honest and scientific point of view in our approach to the problems of music raised by such popular means of diffusing of music as the Gramophone, the radio and the cinema. It is true that our musical modes and methods differ as our languages differ from province to province. But these differences should no longer prevent the national progress of music. The national task cannot be achieved by a single individual. It demands the co-operation of all".

Again in his presidential address at the "First-Hindustani Music Conference" (1936, Bombay), the Maharana advanced a number of valuable suggestions on literature and music, musical instruments, research, music for the screen, dance music, radio music, education of music in schools and universities, development of a uniform system of notation and maintenance of a secular noble cultural tradition.

He said: "for the nation wide advancement of music we must give up the old, semi-old, or traditional modes of tuition in music. It is not right that we should make the good old 'Cheezes', and styles a mystery and at the same time expect popular interest in music to increase. The way to elevate popular taste in music is not to elevate its rich beauties beyond the reach of the average citizen but to make them easily available and accessible to him and to make him sensitive to its cultural value and significance through well thought out programmes of education in music. There was perhaps a very good reason why the 'Ustads' of old days were very reluctant to part with their long treasured cheezes exclusive to their 'Gharanas' and 'Banis'. They were, to some extent, I admit, even justified in protecting these from the profanity of the irresponsible, immature, student, amateur, or exponent or of the commercial journey man. But now the moment has arrived when these treasures must be fully revealed and must be fully shared by all, irrespective of all artificial barriers. We have now to change the methods as well as ancient conventions and customs for imparting instruction in music. The old methods of apprenticeship, memory training and oral instruction have their distinct advantages, no doubt. So have the new. And we must now make an endeavor to adjust both the old and the new to our modern conditions and necessities".

The Maharana strongly believed in secularism and was a staunch supporter of Hindu - Muslim unity. His following words indicated his quest for national solidarity in the field of music and his secular vision for an India which was yet to achieve her independence: "Our pride in 'Gharana' and 'Bani' should not be reduced to mere personal conceits but our aspirations should elevate them positively as an inspiration for further creative effort. My friend Sir Sultan Ahmed in a recent article in the "Calcutta Review" has pointed out with great force one of the difficulties which touch very closely the practicing Muslim musicians. Music and literature have been for a number of years segregated and as he points out the lamentable consequence of this divorce was "the springing up of various schools, or rather musical "families", with their own ways of singing and notions (rather than first hand knowledge of the theory), and their own ideas and memories (naturally differing due to lapse of time and distance of their abode even amongst the followers of the identical school) of the musical features (the huliyas or swarswarups) of the Ragas, Raginis etc.

The result is that at present musicians even of the Northern School differ violently from one another in the musical features of many Ragas and Raginis, each citing the name of his own Ustad (preceptor) or his predecessor as the authority for his assertion, and very few even know the names of the written and published books on the theory of our music. The Hindus also, owing to the want of study of Sanskrit, became

Kumar Prabhatdevji

practiced and acquired efficiency in Hindustani music, made his own contributions to it in the form of new styles of musical compositions and introduced also some Persian melodies like Yaman and similar other combinations of Ragas. However, we must surely maintain the noble traditions of tolerance, scholarly reverence and good will that have distinguished the evolution of Hindustani music and have been its great glory. It is right and necessary as well as opportune that my friend Sir Sultan Ahmed should look back with pride and look forward with hope on the fact that in the evolution of Hindustani music both Hindus and Muslims have inherited a common, national, cultural legacy. For both have contributed to it priceless wealth. As he said - "After Amir Khusrau had joined the band of the savants of Indian music, we find both Hindus and Mohammedans, making their contributions jointly to its development". There never was, and thank God that even today there is not, any communalism among the devotees of this art. If Amir Khusrau contributed Taranas, Quals, etc. Raja Maan Tanwaar, and Baijoo Baawra introduced Hori, Sultan Hussain Sharqi, the brothers Shah Sadaarang Adaarang, and the Emperor Shah Mahomed Shah (Rengeela) introduced and popularized the Khyal style; if Mira Bai introduced the Bhajans, Ghulam Nabi (alias Mian Shori) introduced the Tappas and Nawab Wajid Ali Shah and his Darbar musicians introduced the "Thumris".

the exact compatriots of their Mohammedan brethren.

It was in this state of chaos that Europeans with a taste for music met the Indian musicians and they in their turn not having (in the beginning) directed their attention to the study of Sanskrit books, hastily pronounced that Indian music had no theory at all and was quack, of pariah music. I would request you therefore, to think very seriously about this handicap to these musicians. They must obtain the necessary literary facility. Sir Sultan Ahmed has, moreover, opportunely pointed the example of Amir Khusrau who having studied,

It is a pity that those who seek for a new India a greater future than its glorious past and its sole guarantee in the national solidarity and unity amongst Hindus and Muslims should have till now left neglected one of the most potent instruments of that indispensable unity. Hindustani music is one of those common cultural national assets that should prove to be the cementing tie, the guarantee of national solidarity".

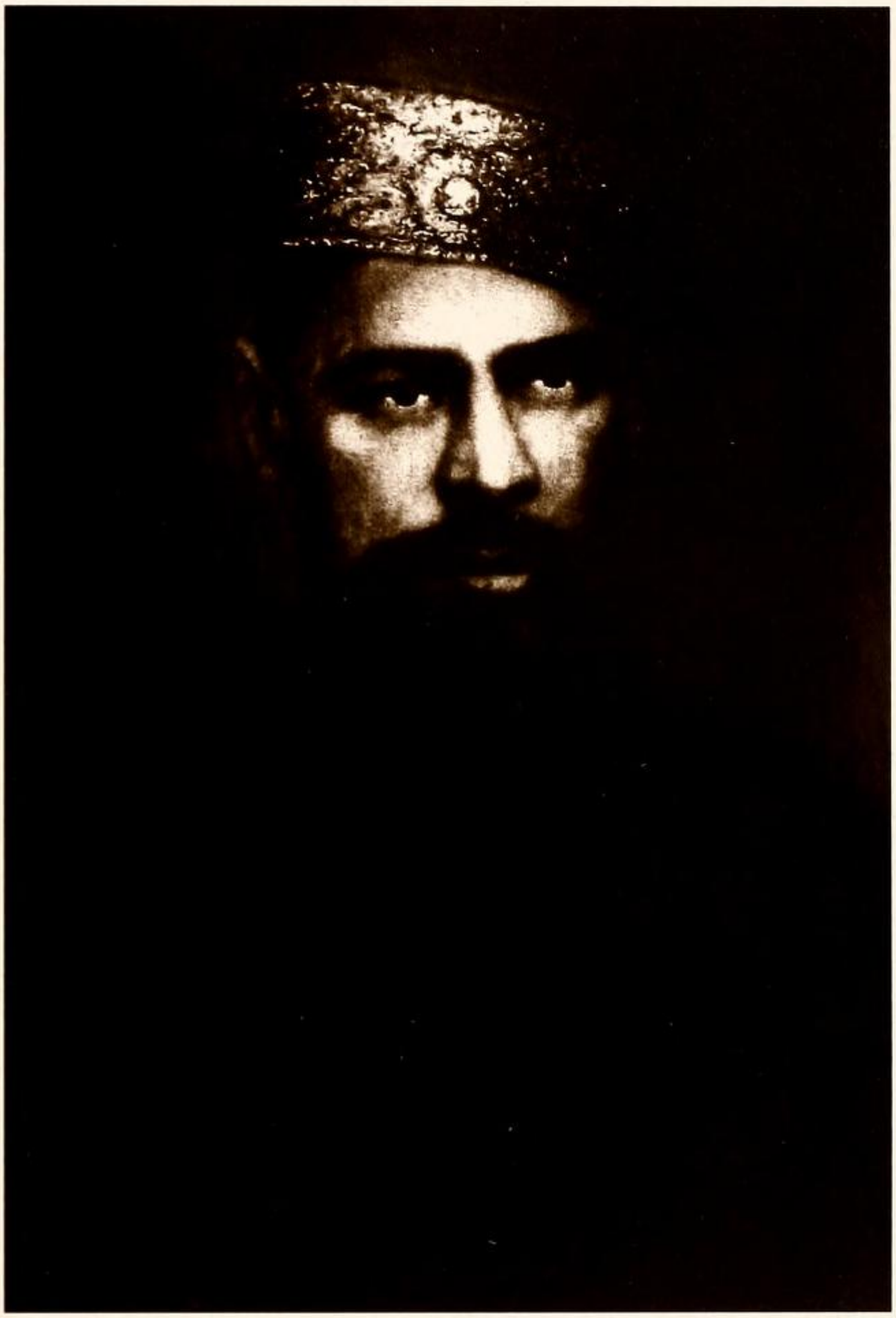
His paper on "Advancement of Indian Music-some practical problems", present-

ed before The Federation of Indian Music and Dancing, Calcutta appreciated the idea of federating the various interests of Indian Music and suggested that "the rich diversity of the musical heritage in the different provinces of our country is our greatest artistic achievement. It is essential to mark out clearly the areas of inter - provincial work which could yield the maximum national results benefiting the maximum number of music artists and exponents. Our first concern should be, therefore to make periodic survey of the conditions of music in the different provinces of the country. The periodic survey should mainly serve three purposes. First, it should suggest the musical distinction peculiar to a province and describe the conditions adverse to its promotion so that they may be removed effectively and permanently. Secondly, the survey should review the work actually done during a particular period, and finally, it must indicate clearly, where and how the province could help in defining and solving the problems of the advancement of music common to all. For example the collection and interpretation of the folk songs, peculiar to a province are its major responsibility".

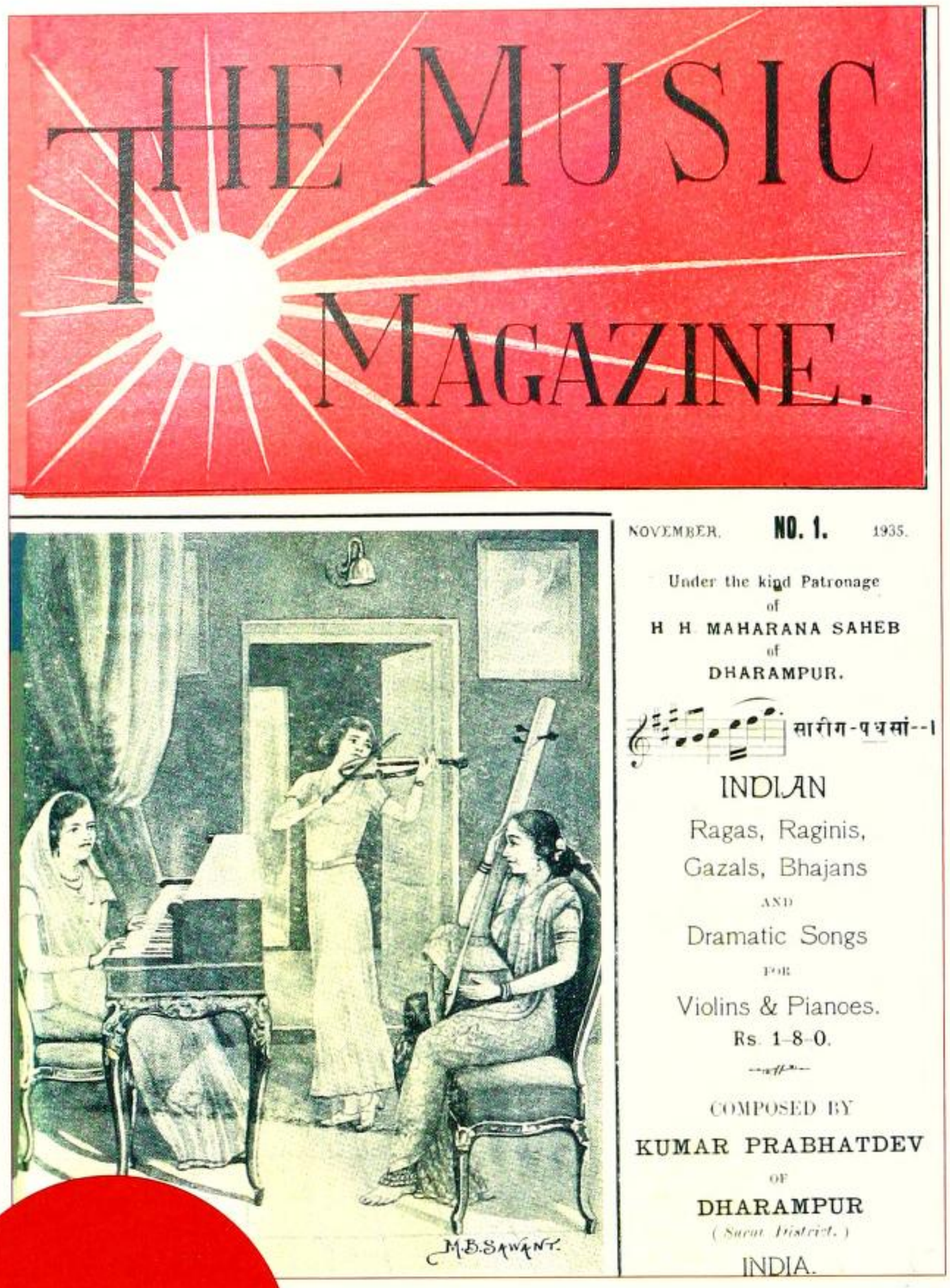
The Late Maharana was also a respected critic. The Illustrated Weekly of India, May, 16th 1937, published his review of "Hindu Music and Rhythm" written by Vishnudass Shirali who achieved fame as music director for Uday Shankar's world famous company of Hindu dancers. The Illustrated Weekly introduced the Maharana as a great patron of Indian music, an accomplished musician as well as a writer on the musical arts of India.

Kumar Shri Prabhatdevji was another illustrious son of this family. Born on 6th November, 1882 he was the youngest son of Maharana Shri Narandevji Sisodia of Dharampur.

Musically inclined, the prince started learning music from the renowned Pandit Shri Aaditramji of Jamnagar while he was pursuing his studies at the Rajkumar College, Rajkot. He developed a strong passion for the Rudra Veena popularly known as Been and began to train with Chunnaji, disciple of the renowned Beenkar Ustad Bande Ali Khan. Later, Chunnaji's brother, Kadar Bux, who was Ustad Bande Ali Khan's senior disciple, also guided Prabhatdevji. Ustad Bande Ali Khan himself frequently visited Dharampur. In his pursuit of perfection Kumar Prabhatdevji also sought help from renowned Beenkar Ustad Rahim Khan of Bhavnagar, Ustad Muraad Khan and Ustad Jalaluddin Khan, all acknowledged stalwarts of that era.



Ustad Bande Ali Khan




1915 onwards Prabhatdevji gave various recitals and also started analyzing the techniques applied by different Gharanas in their compositions. This study led to the publication of two scholarly volumes, 'Raga Praveshika' and ' Sangeet - Prakash' wherein he classified ragas into 12 'Thaats' instead of the usual 10 'Thaats'. After one of his recitals at Allahabad, he was awarded the title of 'Authority of Hindustani Music' by the Viceroy of India. He presided over the Music Conference held at Ahmedabad in 1924. His paper "Indian Music - a general view", was read at the All India Music Conference held at Lucknow on 10th January, 1925. On 17th December, 1940, Prabhatdevji was honoured with a medallion and a certificate by the British Government. Around this time, the Hindustan Record Company released a 78 R.P.M. record of his 'Been Khyal' (record number H - 12025).

Some British composers and administrators who met him were deeply impressed with his erudition, they coaxed him to translate simple Raga bandishes into western staff notation for the benefit of music scholars of the world. Prabhatdevji learnt the western staff notation system and translated simple Raga bandishes into staff notation which were published in the 'Music Magazine' which had a wide circulation in England and Europe.

Kumar Saheb was an extremely generous person and a devoted teacher of the old school who strongly believed in imparting knowledge to deserving students irrespective of their caste, creed or social status; he would provide free accommodation and food to deserving students. Mohamed was one of his illustrious disciples who started Shri Prabhatdevji Sangeet Bharti Music School at Dharampur in 1959 and also initiated the Annual Musical Anniversary Programme in the memory of his great Guru. Shri Mohanlal Knasara, Shri Mohanbhai Bulsara, Late Shri Ambalal Sitari and Shri Shantilal Gohil were some of his other disciples. Kumar Saheb left for his heavenly abode on 25th January, 1943.

Kumar Prabhatdevji's son Jaidevji Prabhatdevji Sisodia fondly recounts some unusual stories about his father's recital that evoke the memories of the legendary musicians whose music was so true that it enchanted not only the birds and animals but also the elements. During one of Prabhatdevji's recitals at Prabhatvilla, Thithal Road Valsad, a nightingale sat on his Been and remained seated there for more than an hour listening to his rendering of raga 'Saawan' and flew away only when the recital came to its end. During another recital on the eve of 'Maha Shivraatri' at the Shiv Temple, Tiskari Lake, Dharampur, the listeners

Kumar Shri Prabhatdevji Saheb under Hindustan Record

were shocked to see a snake climb over 10 steps of the stairs of the temple and sit coiled just a few feet away from him. Sometimes, the snake waved its head in the air inducing fear amongst listeners. Prabhatdevji convinced his listeners not to panic as the snake was a regular listener and would not harm anybody.

Dharampur also became known for innovative development of some musical instruments. The Harmonium is considered unsuitable for Indian melodies because it lacks microtone (shruti). Under royal patronage (with the help of a reputed Parisian firm) the "Shruti Harmonium" was developed with a view to bridge this gap. 'Kacha-Taranga' was another instrument developed under the patronage of the Dharampur state. This instrument resembled the Indian instrument 'Jal Taranga' and had an arrangement of tuned glass pieces on the basis of a Tubophone. It was easy to handle and was not cumbersome like the 'Jal Taranga'. These instruments were first displayed at the 'First Hindustani Music Conference', Bombay during 1936 with a view to solicit feedback from the erudite participants.

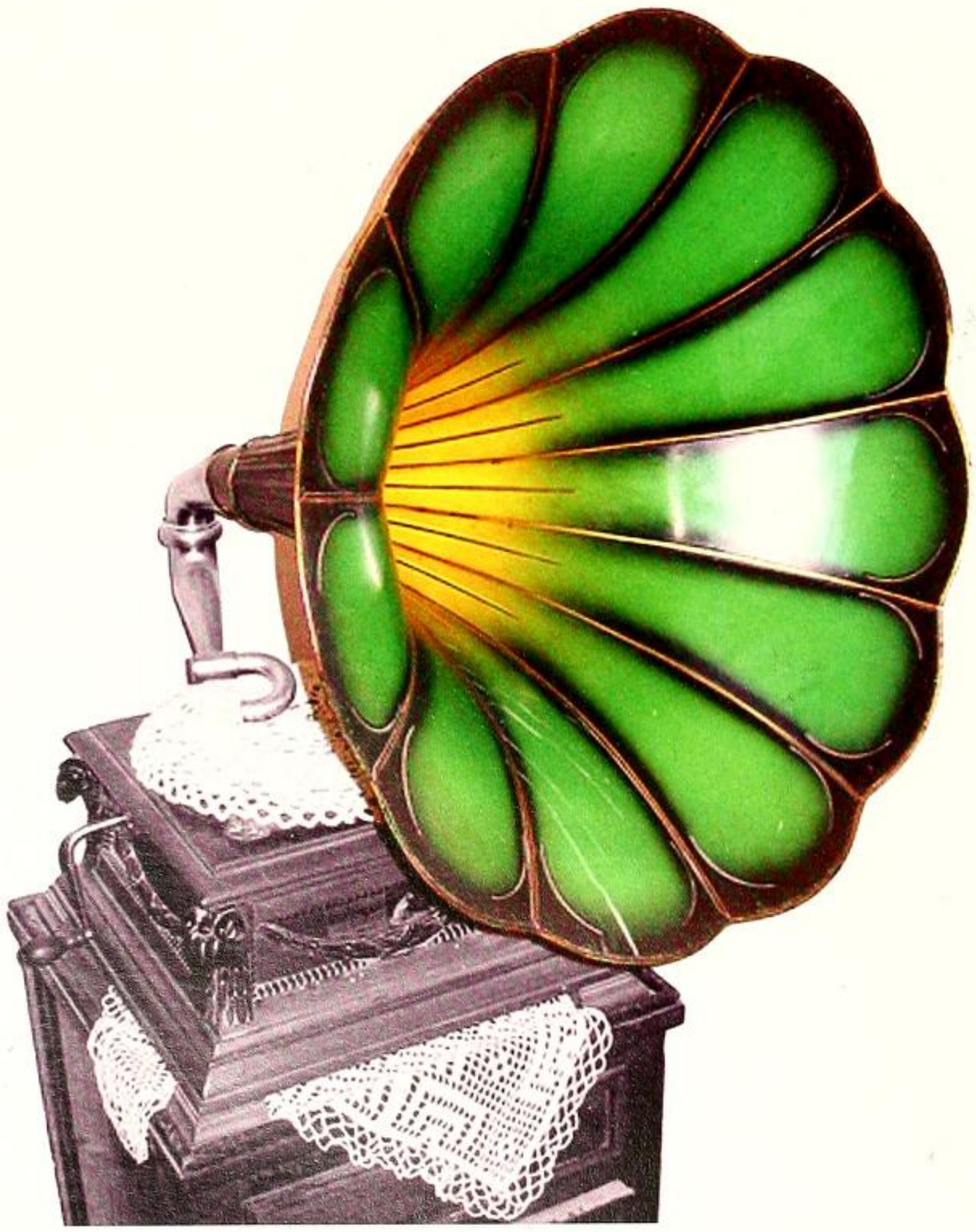
The rulers of Dharampur, apart from concentrating on the administration and socio-economic development of the state, also created a healthy atmosphere for the growth of music. Their being musicians of the first order, their knowledge of music coupled with their royal lineage furthered the cause of music. Though long gone, these Patrons, Pandits and Performers live on in the memory of their admirers.

The Dharampur family continues to host an annual music programme in their memories.

Kumar Prabhatdevji

The last remaining gate of Vishnupur

OLD GRAMOPHONE, 1918



# 10 GOPESHWAR BABU AND VISHNUPUR DHRUVAPADA GHARANA

Surrounded by beautiful hills, Vishnupur was earlier known as Mallabhum. This quaint, small town in the Bankura District of West Bengal, is home to the eponymous Vishnupur Dhruvapada Gharana. The shaivite rulers of Vishnupur who became vaishnavite with the passage of time, were great patrons of art. The town today is best known for its magnificent terracotta temples, the beautiful Bankura horses and a Dhruvapada gharana of its own, in that order.

The plain, simple and distinct style of Vishnupur Dhruvapada has its own tale to tell. Paradoxically, it owes its origin to the fading of the might of the Mughal empire. The decadence in the culture and appreciation of Dhruvapada came to a climax when the last titular Mughal Emperor Shah Alam-II ascended the throne of Delhi and granted through a firman, the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the East India Company. When the noted musicians of the Senia gharana found no encouragement or support from Shah Alam-II, they began to seek refuge in the courts of the Muslim Nawabs, Hindu rajas and rich landlords of Oudh, Bettiah, Vishnupur, Hooghly and different parts of West Bengal.

Gopeshwar Banerjee

Raghunath-II, a progressive ruler of Vishnupur and a great patron of art and culture, invited Ustad Bahadur Khan, son of the great Jiban Khan of the senia gharana , a fine vocalist to Vishnupur. Gadadhar Chakravarti (also referred to as Gadadhar Bhattacharji), a talented vocalist of this period, became a disciple of Bahadur Khan and thus began the Vishnupur gharana of Dhruvapada. Consequently, Gadadhar Chakarvarti taught Dhruvapada to Ram Shankar Bhattacharya (1761-1853) who in turn taught it to Anant Lal Banerjee (1832-1896) the father of Gopeshwar Banerjee.

However, there are others who believe that Ram Shankar Bhattacharya was not a disciple of either Bhahadur Khan or Gadadhar Chakravarti and even Gadadhar Chakarvarti was not a disciple of Bahadur Khan. It was Ram Shankar who was the originator of the Vishnupur style of dhruvpad and his Guru or Ustad was a resident of Agra. The economy of alamkar and gamaka is the hallmark of Vishnupur dhruvapada. It also differs from

Gopeshwar Banerjee
(1880-1963)

the Senia gharana in the rendering of many ragas; for instance, Komal Nishad is used in Behag, Basant and in avaroha of Bhairav ragas; teevra madhyam is not used in Ramkali and Purabi; suddha dhaivata is used in Purabi and so on.

There is, in fact, no link between the Senia Gharana and Vishnupur Gharana, but on the other hand Vishnupur Gharana is related to the source of music that was predominant in the Agra-Mathura-Brindaban zone; and both these styles were directly or indirectly linked with the Gwalior Gharana.

The main controversy regarding Vishnupur Gharana and its link with the Senia Gharana lies in the time factor: King Raghunath did not live beyond 1712, whereas Bahadur Khan (Son of Jiban Khan and grandson of Gulab Khan), lived during the last-part of the 18th century. The other Bahadur Khan (on Tansen's daughter's side), the originator of the famous Rampur Gharana, died in 1870.

Legend also has it that Ram Shankar Bhattacharya learnt the simple style of Vishnupur Dhruvapada from a Pandit of Brindavan region who stayed in Vishnupur returning from a pilgrimage to Puri. Born at Malleshwar-Kadakuli village in Vishnupur, Ram Shankar Bhattacharya was a scholar of Sanskrit and came from a family of Qasimpur village in Rajshahi district of modern Bangladesh. He taught Dhruvapada to Anant Lal Banerjee and to Jadunath Bhattacharjee (alias Jadubhatta), a famous poet-composer, celebrated vocalist and teacher of Jatindranath and Rabindranath Tagore, Radhika Prasad Goswami and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

Gopeshwar Banerjee (1880-1963), the second son of Anantlal Banerjee, was a precocious and talented child. Recognizing his talent, Anantlal began to train him in Dhruvapada Gayaki and when the boy was twelve, sent him to Calcutta for further training in music. Calcutta, in those days, used to be something of a Mecca for musicians. Young Gopeshwar learnt Dhruvapada from Shri Narayan Mishra of Bettiah Gharana, Khayal from Shri Guru Prasad Mishra and tappa from Shri Gopal Chakravarti alias Noolo Gopal. Soon he developed a masterly command over music and became Court Musician in the Court of the Maharaja of Burdwan.

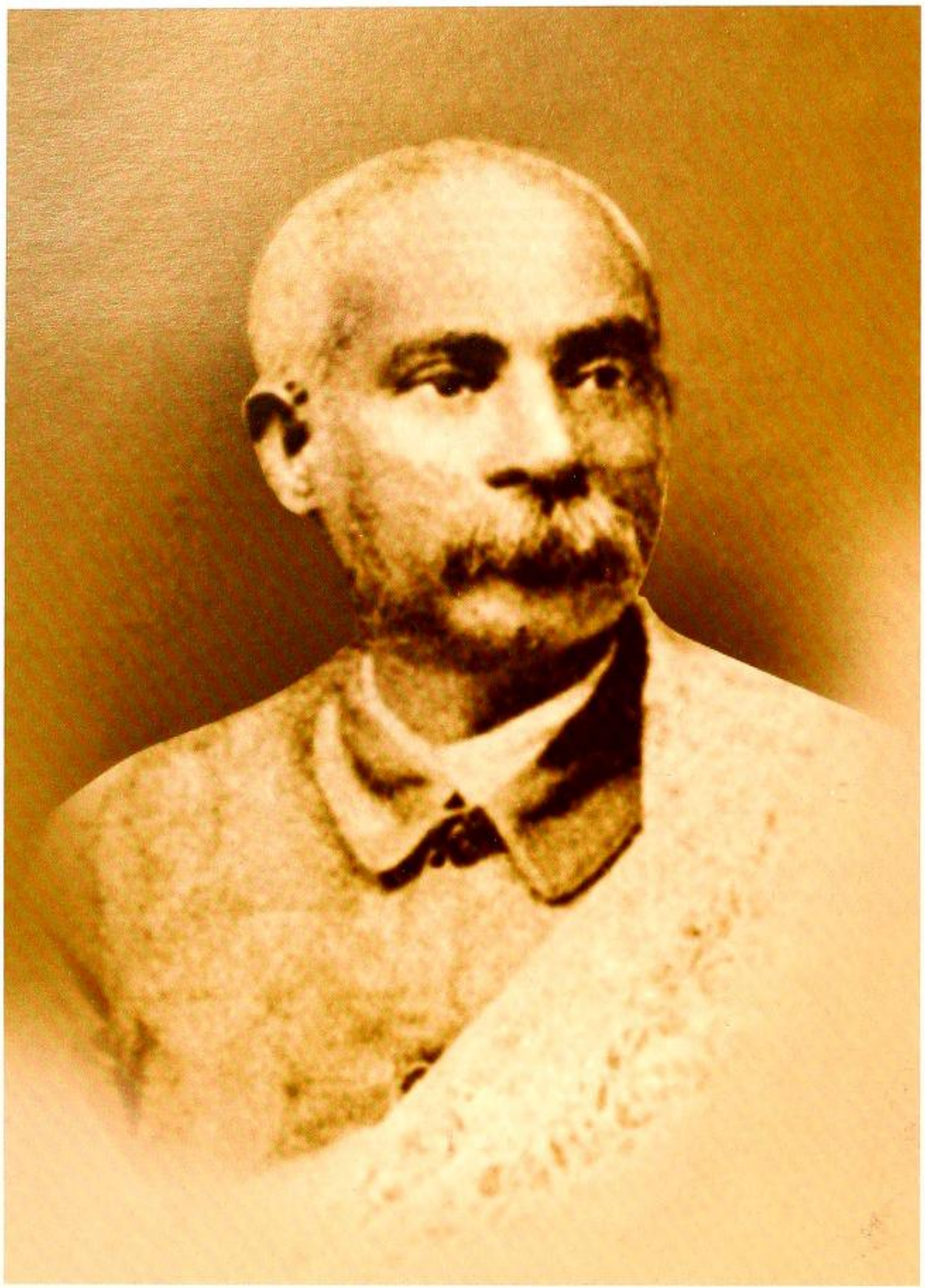
The Maharaja of Burdwan was a great connoisseur of music and used to regularly invite renowned musicians to his court. Gopeshwar Babu availed himself of the opportunity to learn from these visiting greats. He learnt Surbahar from Syed Mohammad, Sitar from Ustad Imdad Khan and also developed mastery in playing Nyas-Tarang, Esraj, Pakhawaj and Tabla. Gopeshwar Babu felt his knowledge of music would remain incomplete without the knowledge of the history and theory of music. He studied these aspects of music as well and wrote a number of books to preserve the cultural legacy of India and also to impart fundamental education in music. Sangeet-Chandrika (2 Vols. - con-

tains a large number of Dhruvapada, Khayal, Tappa and Thumri), Geet-Mala (Bengali devotional songs with notations), Tana-Mala (collection of Khayals with notation), Bharatiya Sangeet-Itihash (2-Vols.), Sangeet-Lahari, Geet-Darpan, Bahu-Bhasaha-Geet O Bahu-Tala-Geet, Sangeet-Subha, Geet-Rajika, Geet-Prabeshika are some of his better known works. His book "Sangeet Chandrika" was prescribed as a text book for higher classes of the Marris College of Music, Lucknow (now Bhatkhande Vishwavidyalaya, Lucknow). A dedicated musicologist and educator, his persistent pleading and persuasion resulted in music becoming an optional subject in the syllabus for the Matriculation Examination in Bengal as early as 1937.

Gopeshwar Babu was a favourite of the Tagore family. Maharishi Debendranath Tagore often invited him to sing. Impressed by his profound knowledge of the tradition of music, Maharaja Shri Jyotindra Mohan Tagore conferred on him the title of "Sangeet Nayak": H.M.V. record numbers GC-17-12493 and GC-17-12492 bear testimony to this fact: they mention his name as "Sangit Nayak Gopeshwar Banerjee".

Maharaja Jyotindra Mohan Tagore

Gopeshwar Banerjee: "His Master's Voice"



Babu Aghornath Chakravarti (1852-1915)

Gopeshwar Babu's active life can be divided into three main phases: his affiliation with the Burdwan Raj (1895-1924); the Calcutta phase (1924-1942), the last twenty-one years of his life in his native town of Vishnupur (1942-1963). Gopeshwar Babu often came to Calcutta during his employment at Burdwan. These visits became a regular fortnightly feature when he was appointed Principal of "Sangeet Sangha"- an important music institution run by Lady Pratibha Chowdhury, wife of Justice Ashutosh Chowdhury of the Calcutta High Court. The outgoing Principal Vishwanath Rao, better known as Vishwanath Dhamari, was an outstanding vocalist, and the appointment of Gopeshwar Babu in the place of such an eminent musician went to show how highly he was appreciated by the authorities of the institution, the teaching staff of which included such renowned musicians as Kanchan Khan and his brother Keramatullah Khan - sarod player, Lakshmi Prosad Misra, better known as Lakshmi Guru, vocalist and beenkar, Shyam Sundar Misra, Darshan Singh etc.

Considered the icon of the Vishnupur Dhruvapada, Gopeshwar Babu was invited to attend the third All India Music Conference held at Banaras. He also participated in The All India Music Conference held in January, 1925 at Lucknow, where he sang Dhruvapada in Raga Chhayanat and Adana and was accompanied on Mridanga by Bhagwan Chandra Sen Gupta. This was a 9:00 PM to 12:00 Midnight session of the Music conference held on 10th January, 1925 and before him had performed Munshi Haracharan Lal of Tikamgarh (Orchha State) on the Pakhawaj. After Gopeshewar Babu's performance the great Ustad Allauddin Khan of Maihar played the Violin. His tabla accompanist was the renowned Pandit Biru Mishra of Banaras. Gopeshwar Babu was awarded a silver medal for his performance in this conference. Other awardees of gold or silver medals in this section of the conference were Ustad Allabande Khan of Alwar, Ustad Nasir-u-ddin Khan of Indore, Shri Chandan Chaube of Mathura, Ustad Nazir Khan of Rampur and Shri Radhika Prasad Goswami of Bengal.

Very few recordings of this talented musician were made by recording companies till 1910. He was first recorded by William Sinkler Darby during the 1904-1905 recording session of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. As a result four records of 10 size were released: Terana-Adana Qawali (record number GC-2-12861); "Langar Det Mohe Gheri" (record number GC-2-12766 of Behag Qawali), "Brahmomoyee Parashtopara" (record number GC-2-12833 of Yaman-Aratheka) and "Ke Tumi Mohan Sishu" (record num-

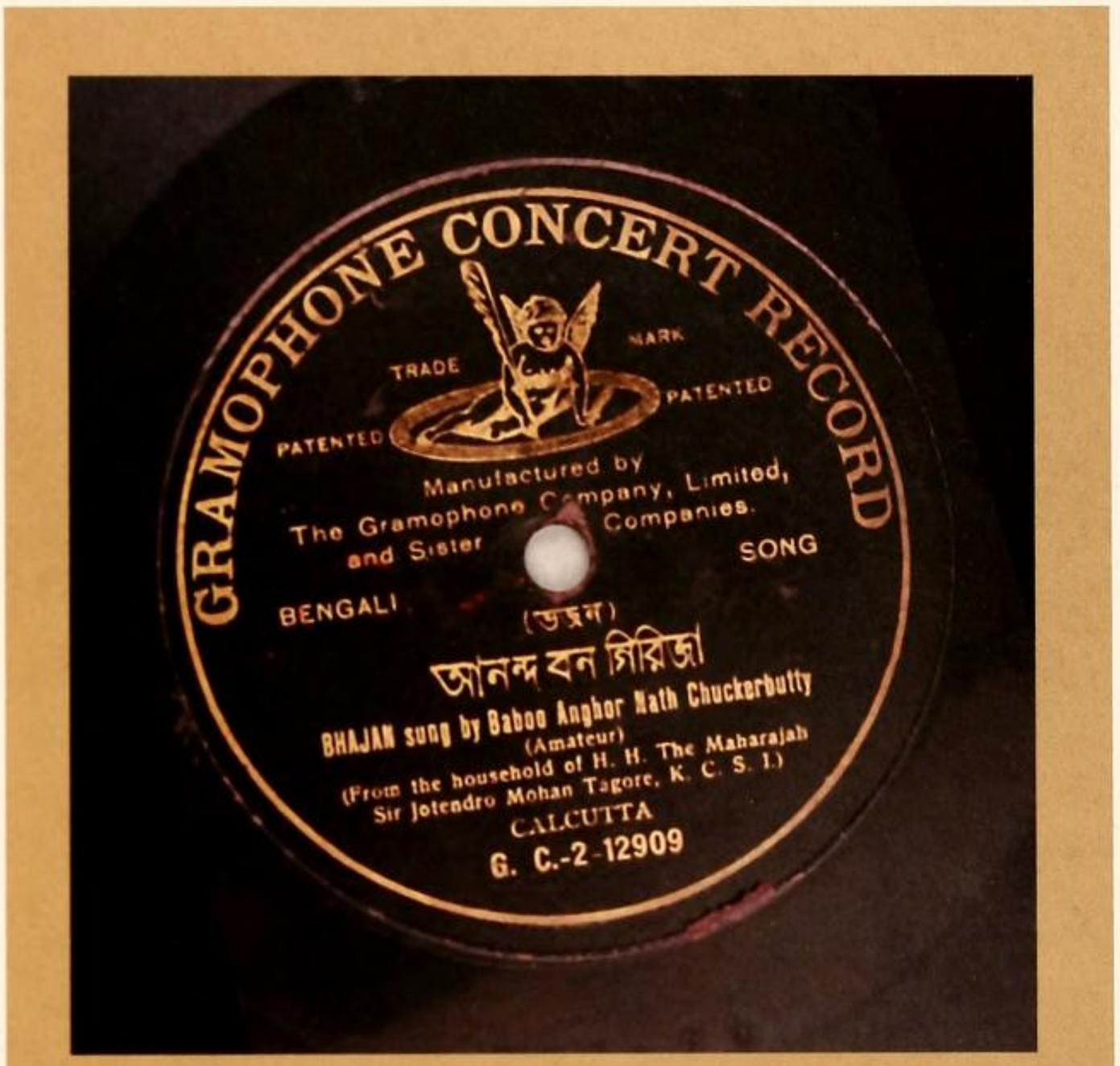
ber GC-2-12834 ).

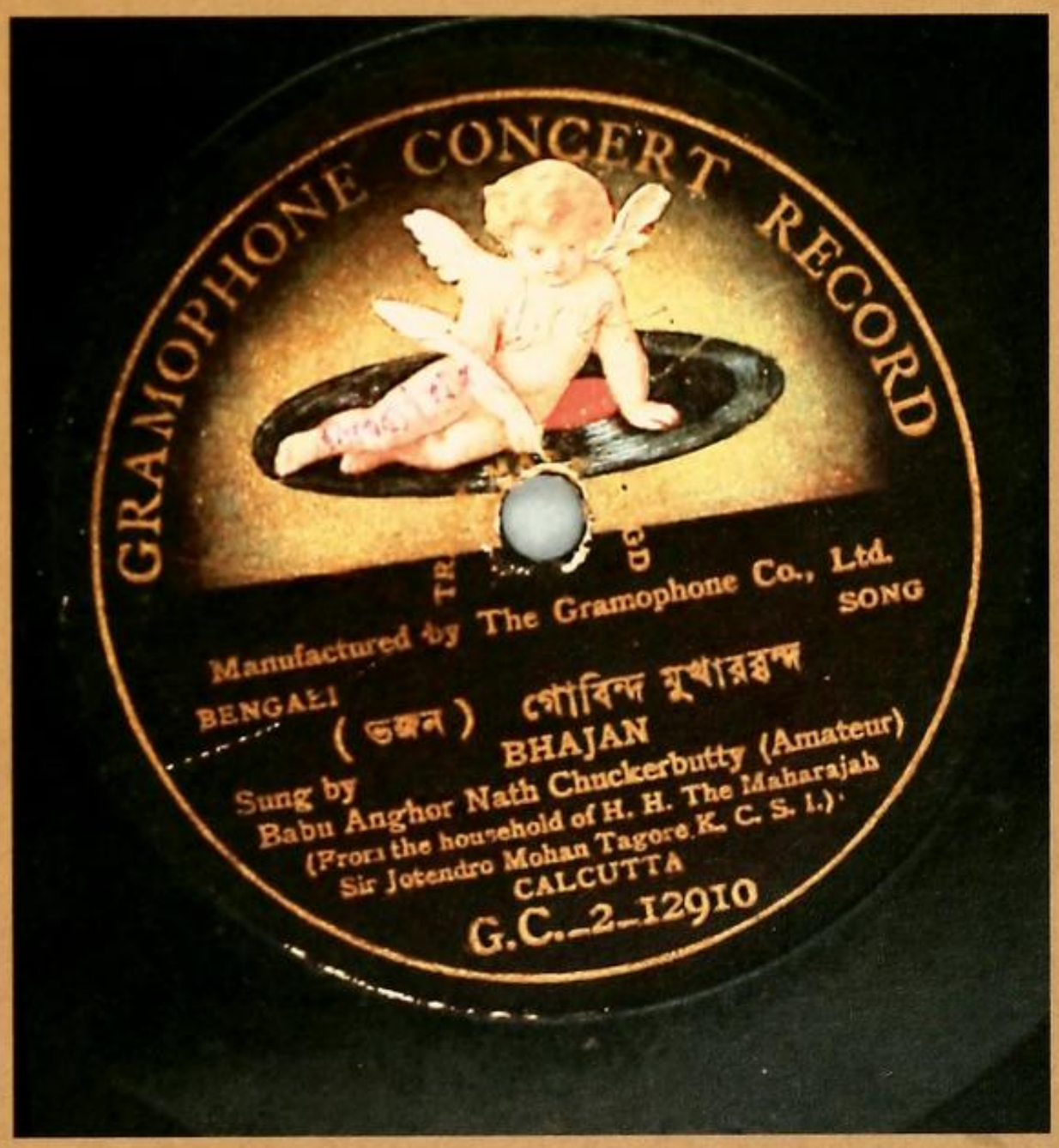
Gopeshwar Babu remained a lone crusader for the cause of Vishnupur Dhruvapada Gharana. He trained a number of disciples, noteworthy among them were Maharajadhiraj Uday Chand Mehtab of Burdwan, Maharaja of Natore and members of the Mayurbhanj Raj family. Though his disciples carried on the legacy of Dhruvapada gayaki of Vishnupur Gharana, his sad demise on 29th July 1963, left a vacuum impossible to fill.

All his life Gopeshwar Babu struggled to safeguard Vishnupur Dhruvapada from the influence of the Khandarvani style (Veera rasa) or Bettiah Gharana. Khandarvani style was immensely prevalent in Bengal during the last quarter of 19th century and 1st quarter of 20th century. Babu Aghornath Chakravarti, Shri Radhika Prasad Goswami and Shri Vishwanath Rao alias Vishwanath Dhamari were the main exponents of Khandarvani.

Babu Aghornath Chakravarti (1852-1915), a leading vocalist of Bengal, was born at Rajpur in 24-Parganas in Bengal. He had the opportunity to learn music from a number of eminent musicians of his times. Besides Alibux Khan, he also studied under Murad Ali Khan(Gwalior), Daulat Khan (Atrauli) and Shrijan Bai. A highly talented musician, he was a master of Dhruvapada and Tappa besides various other singing styles. His amazing music is the subject of music-lore in Bengal and Kashi. He used to begin his singing without alapa because he maintained that it was only a wastage of time. In his last days he went to live at Kashi where he was honoured with the title "Sangeet Ratnakar" by the connoisseurs of the town. Like many Pundits and Ustads of his day, Aghor Babu too did not favour the idea of disc recordings. However, with the help of his patron Maharaja Jyotindra Mohan Thakur, a few of his songs were recorded without his knowledge by William Sinkler Darby and Max Hampe during the recording session of 1904-05 at Calcutta. These songs: "Ananda Ban Girija"(record number GC-2-12909 of Bhajan), "Gobinda Mukhar Binda"(GC-2-12910 of Bhajan), "Najra

Records by Babu Aghornath Chakarvarti

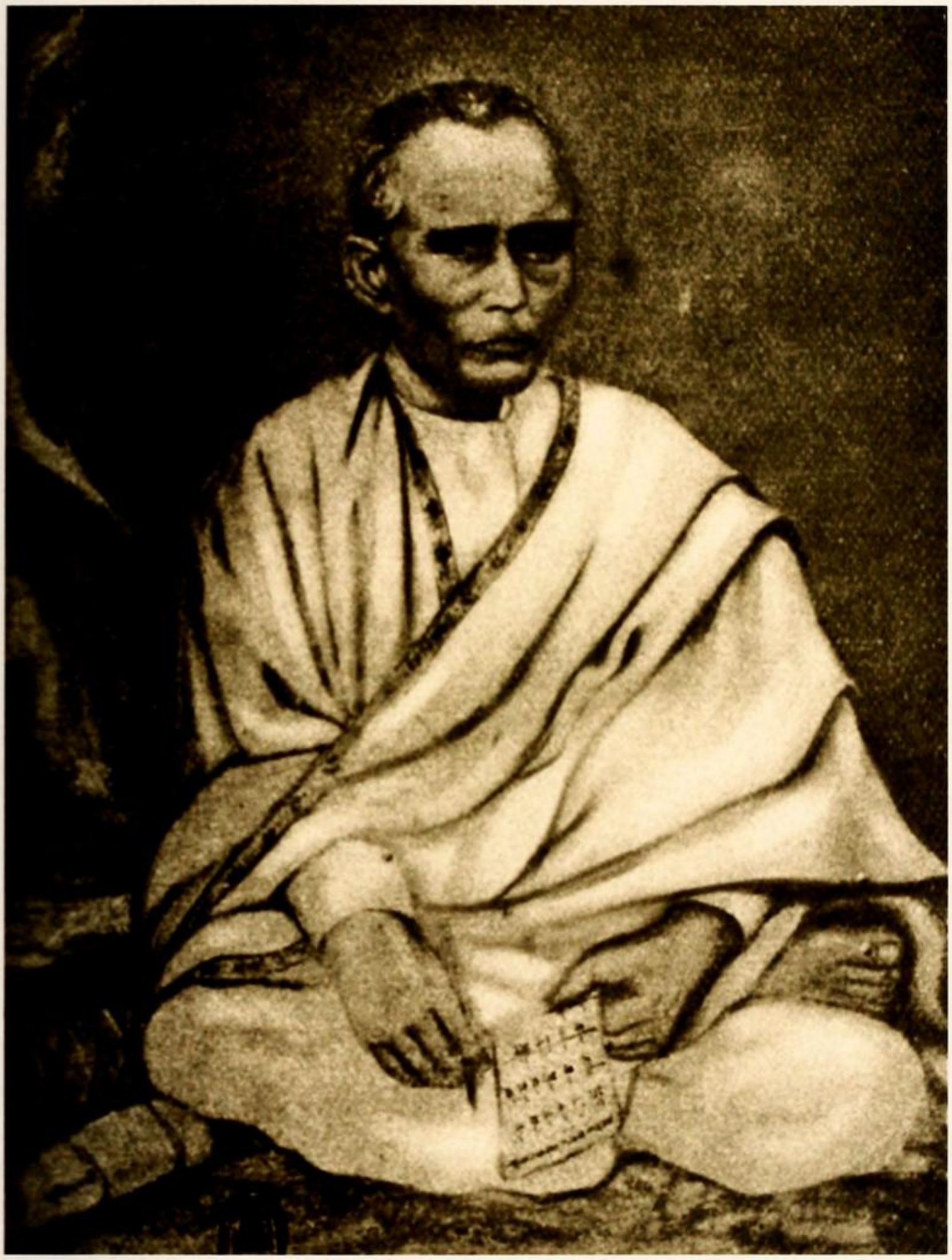


Records by Babu Aghornath Chakarvarti

Dil Bahar" (GC-2-12911 of Tappa), "Bhifal Janam Bhifal Jiban"(GC-2-12912 of Bhairabi), and "Lap Laptane" (GC-2-12913 of Dhamar) were released under the Gramophone Concert Label as 10" size records. The fact that there is no instrumental backup except Tabla in these recordings supports the legend that they were made in an intimate setting, without the knowledge of the artist. All these records were extremely popular and bear testimony to Aghor Babu's musical prowess. Some of these records, mention his name as "Babu Aughor Nath Chuckerbutty (Amateur) (From the household of H.H. The Maharaja Sir Jotendra Mohan Tagore, K.C.S.I) Calcutta", which indicate the name of the singer as well as his patron.

The other luminary of Bettiah School, Shri Radhika Prasad Goswami (1863-1924), a singer-composer with amazing musical skills, was born in Vishnupur.



Kshetra Mohan Goswami

His father Jagatchand Goswami was a famous Pakhawaj player. Radhika Prasad Goswami was highly talented and trained under a number of eminent musicians like Anantalal Banerji, Dinabhandhu Goswami, Kshetra Mohan Goswami, Gopal Chandra Chakravarti, Guruprasad Misra and Shivnarayan Misra (Banaras). He was the Principal of the Sangeet Vidyalaya, founded by Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi of Kashimbazar and later, became a court-musician of Kasimbazar, Natore and to Raja Sir Sourindra Mohan Thakur of Calcutta. Maharsi Devendranath Thakur of Calcutta was also his patron for a long time. An unchallenged master of Dhruvapada and Dhamar, Goswami was equally at ease in other modes of singing as well. He was a great teacher and some of his disciples were Girija Shankar Chakravarti and Jnanendra Prasad Goswami. His renderings of Ashawari (record number GC-13-12160) and Ramkali (record number GC-13-12164) acknowledge his name as "sung by Prof. Radhika Prasad Goswami, Principal, Maharajah of Cossimbazar's Music School."

Prof. Radhika Prasad Goswami:Gramophone Concert Record

Another stalwart of this school, Vishwanath Rao or Vishwanath Dhamari (d.1921), was son of Sadashiv Rao Bhatt, a distinguished vocalist, a well-known Dhrupadiya and a court-musician of Bettiah. He initially trained under his father and later became a disciple of the Misra brothers (Guruprasad Misra and Shivanarayan Misra of Banaras) with whom he came to Calcutta. He found

Vishwanath Rao

patronage at Natore and other zamindaris of Bengal. He taught illustrious musicians like Lal Chand Boral and his famous son Rai Chand Boral. George Dillnutt recorded Vishwanath Rao for The Gramophone Company Ltd. between 2nd and 25th September 1909 at Calcutta. The company released these recordings as ten 10 size records (record numbers GC-8-12400 to GC-8-12404

and GC-8-12406 to GC-8-12409 and GC-8-12200). Of these, "Tara Tara Tara Bole" (record number GC-8-12200 of Chhayanat), " Emon Din Ki Hobe Tara" (GC-8-12406 of Sindhu Kafi), and " Har Har Bom Bom Bom" (GC-8-12408 of Prabhati) became highly popular numbers. During the same period, three of his records, " Jamune Aei Ki Tumi Shei Jamuner" (record number 5-012000 of

Vishwanath Rao: Gramophone Concert Record

Kirton), " Jaton Kore Rhide Rakho" (5-012001 of Kalengda), and "Ki Habe Ma Tara Sheshe" (5-012002 of Behag) were also released under 12'' size "Gramophone Monarch Record". The Beka Grand Company also recorded Vishwanath Rao, at least one such record (record number 21737 of Kanada Titala) is still around.

Vishwanath Rao: Beka-Grand & Gramophone Monarch Record

Prakash and Hemant Kumari
in 'Noor Jahan'

EDISON "FIRESIDE" PHONOGRAPH,
MODEL "B" WITH CYGNET HORN, 1911

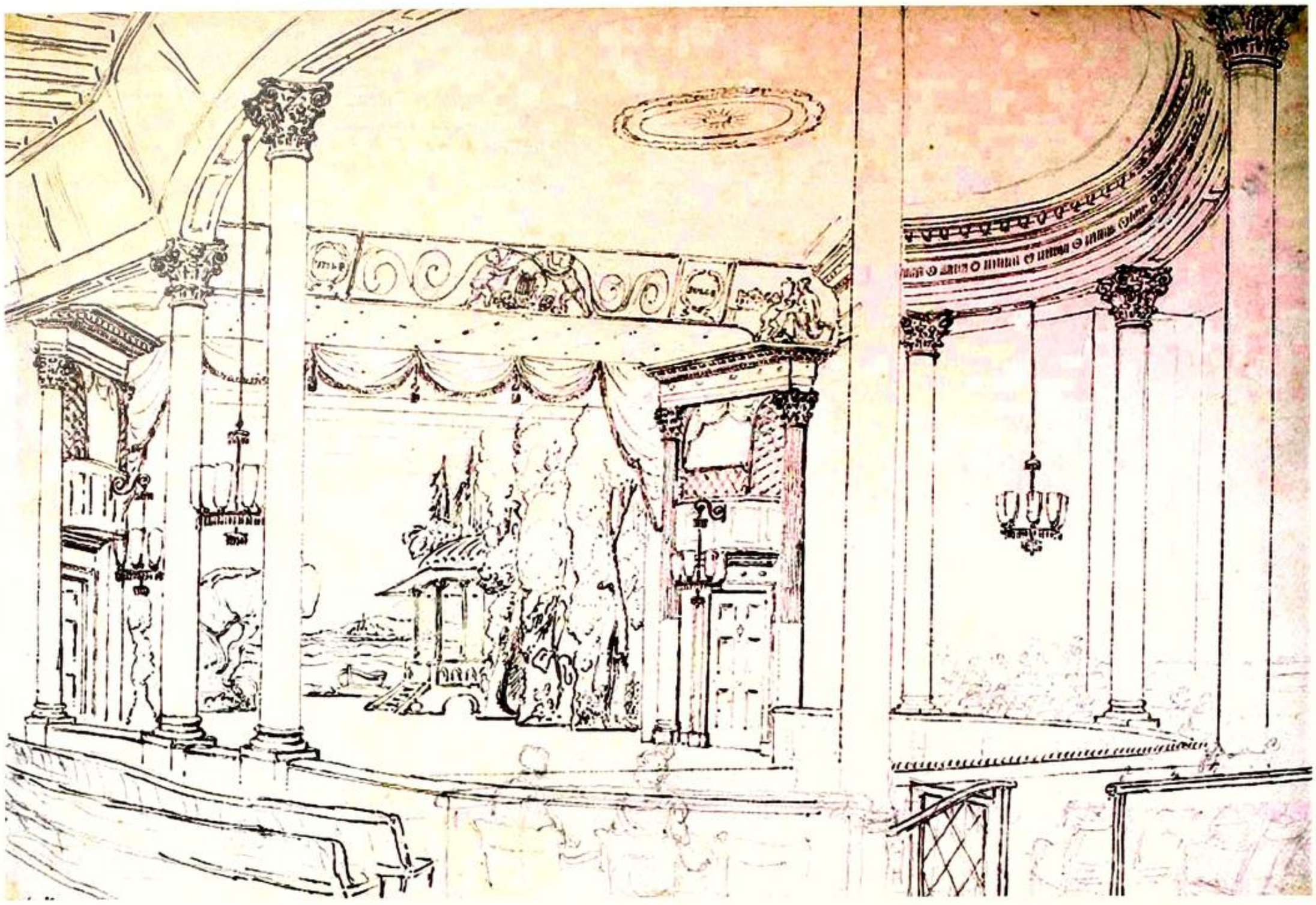
# 11 EARLY BENGAL THEATRES: A PHOTODISCOGRAPHIC TRIBUTE

The tradition of theatre and its folk forms was well established in Bengal much before the establishment of the modern Bengali theatre under the impact of the English Theatre. Folk forms like Bolan, Kavi, Tushu, Baul, Alkap, Gambhira and Chhau had been flourishing in Bengal for centuries. Every village temple had a chandi-mandap attached to it where secular and religious performances took place. References of 'Buddha-Nataka' in ancient Coryapada; composition of Gita Govinda by the court poet of Bengali King Lakshman Sen, Jayadev; Krishna-Kirtan of Chandidas; Natya Giti, Krishna Jatra of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and numerous other jatras like Nal-Damayanti Jatra, Vidya Sunder Jatra, Puranic Jatra, Ram Jatra are some examples of the traditional theatrical forms which existed and enriched the cultural history and heritage of Bengal and thus India.

Dwarka Nath Tagore

The British brought with them a rich theatre tradition, as a consequence the earliest English theatre, 'The Play House' was established in Calcutta in 1753. In 1775 another well-equipped, high-end theatre "The New Play House" was established. Sir Warren Hastings, the then Governor-General, was one of its patrons. The entry fee per person to the 'box' of this theatre was one gold mohur. After 1789 a number of English theatres were established in Calcutta: Mrs. Emma Bristow's Residential Theatre (1789); The Wheeler Place Theatre (1797); The Atheneum Theatre (1812); The Chowringhee Theatre (1813); The Dum Dum Theatre (1817); The Boitaconnah Theatre (1824) and The Sans Souci Theatre (1839); but most of them were short-lived. The Chowringhee Theatre (1813-1839) was one of the best among English Theatres. Dwarka Nath Tagore, the grandfather of Rabindra Nath Tagore, was the only Indian associated with this theatre and in 1835 purchased it. It was gutted by a devastating fire in 1839.

The Sans Souci Theatre created a history of sorts when on 17th August, 1848, a young Indian appeared as Othello, the tragic hero of Shakespeare, on its stage. It was a first for an English theatre at a time when "a native gentleman" would not be allowed to enter the precincts of an English playhouse, let alone act in one. The fact of a "Black" acting in "White" theatre



Chowringhee Theatre
(1813-1839)

in the capital city of the Empire is an indication of the social changes and attitudes that had taken place since the time the Calcutta Theatre was built in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Baishnav Churun Addya, the "Hindoo Othello" apparently acquitted himself well in the title role because a contemporary editorial in "Bengal Hurkara" commented: "Last night with one of his (Shakespeare's) best tragedies (Hamlet) and the cast exceedingly good, the theatre was more than half empty." [1]

Actors of the caliber of James Vining or Mrs. Deacle were not used to playing to 'more than half-empty" houses and returned to England not long afterwards. The new proprietor, Mr. Barry, managed to tide over the loss and gave the theatre a new, if brief, lease of life. He was a man full of energy and ideas- the one idea that created a sensation was his decision to launch a native actor in the role of "Othello".

However, during the era of public theatres an important event was the setting up of the first Bengali theatre by Heresim Lebedeff who staged a play in Bengali as far back as in 1795. Lebedeff, a Russian adventurer of Ukrainian origin, first came to Madras as a band master and moved to Calcutta in Aug.-Sept. 1787. In Calcutta, he organized a number of benefit performances and earned both popularity as well as money. Lebedeff opened a Theatre at Doomtullah, Calcutta called 'Lebedeff's Bengally Theatre' and inserted advertisements for plays which appeared in 'Calcutta Gazette' on 5th and 26th November, 1795 and on 10th March 1796. In his introduction to 'A Grammar of the pure and mixed Indian Dialects (1801AD)' Lebedeff recollected: 'I translated two dramatic pieces namely, 'The Disguise' and 'Love is the best Doctor', into Bengalee language... I invited several learned pundits who perused the work attentively... After the approbation of the pundits,

Golucknath Dash, my linguist, made me a proposal that if I chose to present this play publicly, he would engage to supply me with actors of both sexes from among the natives'.

Keeping his word Golucknath Dash collected a band of players, men and women, for the play 'The Disguise' and trained them for the stage. The play was an absolute novelty then because the native jatra theatre used no stage, designed costumes, lighting, scenes, etc. Dash must have been assisted by a few others whose names and identities are still unknown. Not much is known about Golucknath Dash himself who, in a way, remained the pioneer producer of a play in Bengali audience in a public theatre in Calcutta.[2]

Lebedeff had left India by 1798, but his initiative woke the locals to the possibility of opening a theatre of their own to stage Indian plays. These were the early days of the Indian renaissance when a new consciousness was beginning to pervade all spheres of life. The result was the opening of a number of private Indian-owned theatres between 1831 and 1871. Almost thirty-five years after Lebedeff staged the first play in Bengali, Prasanna Kumar Tagore established the first private Bengali theatre 'The Hindu Theatre' in his garden-estate at Narkeldanga. According to the May issue of Asiatic Journal, 1832, this theatre opened on 28th December, 1831. Paradoxically, The Hindu Theatre did not stage a Bengali play for its inaugural show- the first two plays staged by this theatre were "Julius Caesar" and the English translation of Bhabavhuti's famous Sanskrit play Uttar Ram Charitra. The Hindu Theatre did not last long but it encouraged a number of other private theatres namely, Shambazar Theatre (1835), Oriental Theatre (1853-57), Jorasanko Natyyasala (1854), Ashutosh Deb's Theatre (1857), Vidyot Sahini Theatre (1857), Belgatchia Theatre (1858-61), Metropolitan Theatre (1859), Pathurighata Theatre (1859-72), Sovabazar Theatre (1865-67), Jorasanko Theatre (1865-67), Bowbazar Theatre (1868) and Baghbazar Amateur Theatre (1868-72).

The Shambazar Theatre was owned by Nabin Chandra Basu. Established in 1835, it staged well-known Bengali poet Bharat Chandra's tragic-comic play 'Vidya Sunder'. An extravagant production, this play experimented with several stages created at Basu's grand mansion and went on from 12:30 midnight to 6:30 in the morning in the fashion of indigenous theatre forms. This was also the first Bengali play to publicise the names of female actors essaying female characters. The Hindu Pioneer of October 1835, reported: "The female Characters in particular were excellent. The part of Bidya (The daughter of Raja Bir Singh) the lover of Sunder played by Radhamoni (generally called Moni) a girl of nearly 16 years of age was very ably sustained: her graceful motions, her sweet voice and her love tricks with Sunder filled the minds of the audience with rapture and delight..... The other female characters were equally well performed and among the rest we must not omit to mention that the part of the Rani or wife of Raja Birshingha and that of Malini (a name applied to a woman who deals in flowers) were acted by an elderly woman Joy-Durga, who did justice to both characters in the two fold capacity; she eminently appeared amongst the other performers, and delighted the hearers with song; and another woman Rajkumari usually called Raju played the part of a maid servant to Bidya, if not in a superior manner yet as ably as Joy Durga."

Basu's enthusiasm for innovation proved to be imprudent as it ruined him financially and he was trapped in heavy debt to the tune of more than two lac rupees. However, he will always be remembered as the pioneer of fusion of the eastern and western dramatic traditions.

Private theatre catered to an exclusive, affluent audience which could afford its costly entry tickets. It was not everyone's theatre but it definitely contributed in lay-

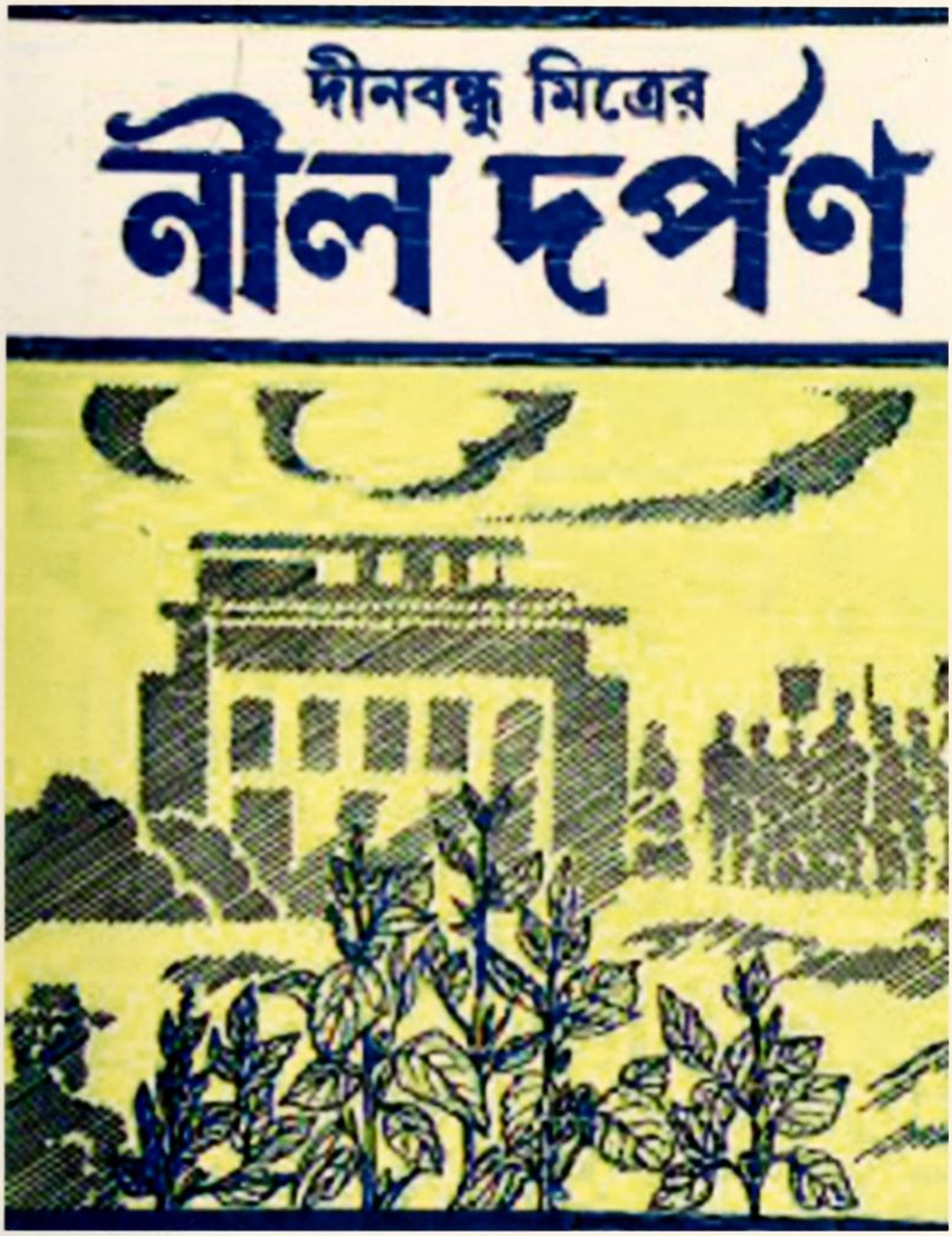
Girish Chandra Ghosh

Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi

ing down the foundation stone of future public theatres (sadharon rangalay) of Bengal. In tune with its times, it not only allowed female actors a place, it also acknowledged them; risking the displeasure of its upper-caste clients who were after all the beneficiaries and propagators of the current social system, it staged plays like 'Kulin Kula Sarvasva' which criticized the custom of polygamy prevalent in contemporary Bengal.

Written by Ramnarayan Tarkaratna, 'Kulin Kula Sarvasva' was staged at the residence of Joyram Basak at Charak Danga sometime during (1856-57) and had the distinction of being the first original modern Bengali play to be staged. It proved to be something of a trendsetter- 'Sharmistha', 'Krishna Kumari' and 'E Ke I Ki Bole Sabhyata' (by poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt) and 'Sadhabar Ekdashi' (by Dinabandhu Mitra) targeted the English educated Indian who was blindly aping British mannerisms in the name of modernity.

Significantly, 'Sadhabar Ekdashi' was staged by the private theatre, The Baghbazar Amateur Theatre during 1868. It had Girish Chandra Ghosh, the future 'Father of the Bengal Theatre' in the central role of Nimaichand. An enterprise of a group of middle class youths, Baghbazar Amateur Theatre heralded the emergence of an era of public theatres in Bengal. Involved with the staging of indigenous dramatic forms like Jatra, Tarja, Panchali, Kobi-gan and kata-katha they had already formed their own amateur concert group the Baghbazar Amateur Concert. Prominent among the Baghbazar youngmen were, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi, Radhamadhab Kar and Nogendra Nath Banerjee who used their meager resources to create this theatre. These young men were to become central figures of the modern Bengali theatre. The Baghbazar group had the blessings and support of intellectuals like Sisir Kumar Ghosh - Editor of Amrit Bazar Patrika; Nabagopal Mitra or National




'National Theatre' opened with the famous play 'Neeldarpan

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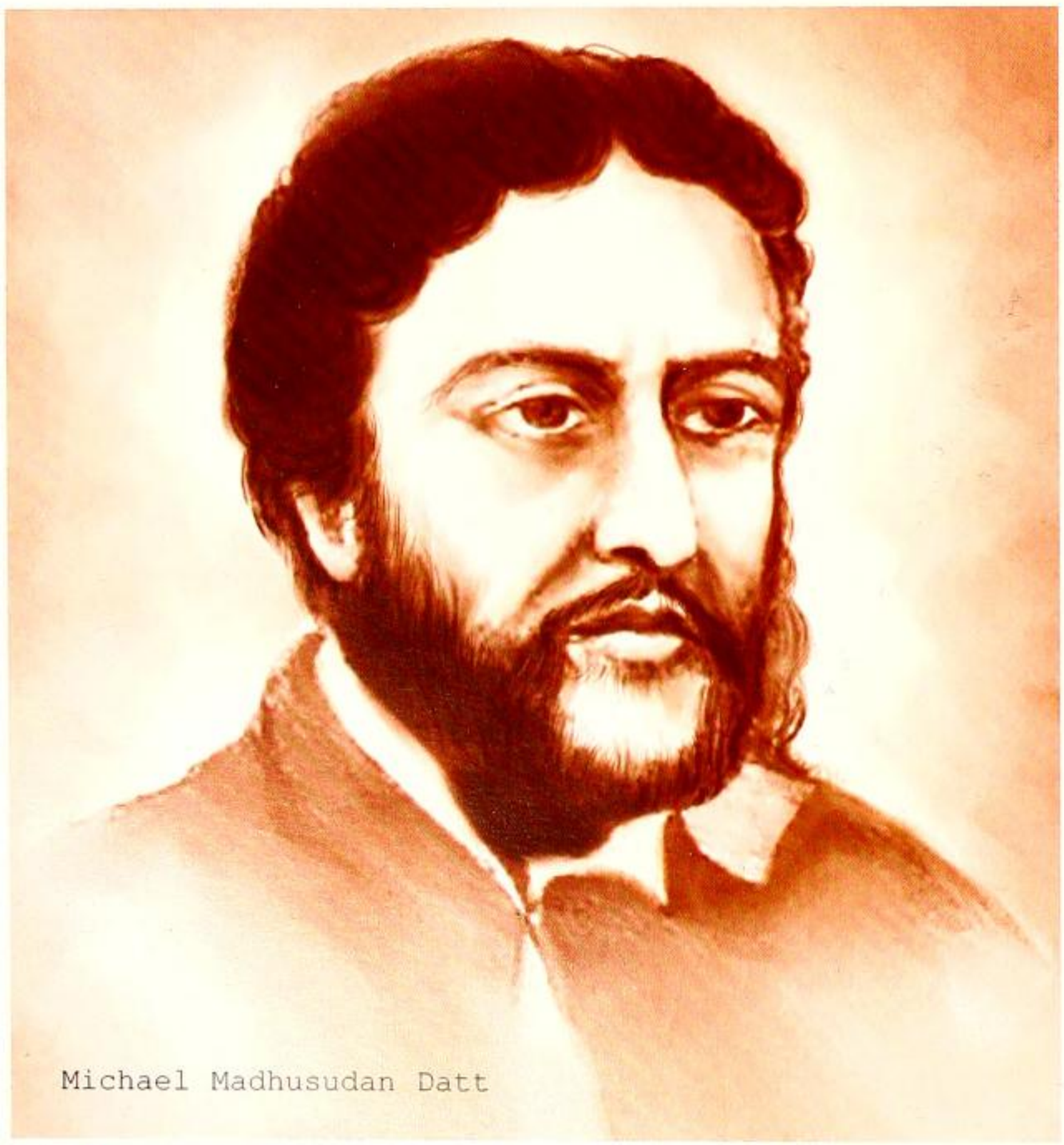
Nabagopal- Editor of the National paper; and Man Mohan Basu- Editor of Madhyastha. The enthusiasm and support of these seniors resulted in the establishment of the first public theatre of Bengal, 'National Theatre' (1872-73), in rented premise at 33, Upper Chitpore Road, Calcutta. On 20th November, 1872, the 'Englishman' reported: "a few native gentlemen of Baghbazar have established a theatrical Society, named the Calcutta National Theatrical Society, their object being to improve the stage, as also encourage native youths in the composition of new Bengali dramas from the proceeds of sales of tickets. The attempt is laudable one, and is the first of its kind. The first public performance is to take place on the 7th proximal in the premises of the late Babu Madhusudan Sandel, Upper Chitpore Road."

'National Theatre' opened with the famous play 'Neeldarpan' on 7th December 1872. The play was published anonymously in 1860, with the legend, "written by a passenger for the benefit of poor ryots who have been bitten by deadly Cobra i.e.

Babu Kaliprossanna Sinha



Michael Madhusudan Datt

British Indigo Planters." in place of the writer's name because the writer Dinabandhu Mitra was then employed as an inspecting Post Master with the postal department. Highly critical of the reign of terror unleashed by the British indigo planters, the book attracted the attention of both the public as well as the Government. Reverend James Long got it translated in English by famous poet and dramatist Michael Madhusudan Datt under the approval of the then Chief Secretary of Government of Bengal. The organization of 'British Indigo Planters', i.e. "Land Holders Association of British India" vehemently opposed and protested against the content of this book, as a consequence a case was presented before the Hon'ble Court at Calcutta on 19th July, 1861. Reverend James Long was sentenced to one month's simple imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 1000. The fine was immediately paid by Babu Kaliprossanna Sinha. 'Neeldarpan' highlighted the exploitation and humiliation of Indian indigo workers at the hands of British indigo planters. In her autobiography the famous actress Binodini stated that while their troupe was performing 'Neeldarpan' at Chhatramanjil, Lucknow, there was a sudden commotion as one British Sahib climbed up the stage to beat 'Torap', when in the course of the play a character 'Torap' (an Indian ryot enacted by Babu Moti Lal Sur) objected to the assault on an Indian lady character (enacted by Miss Khetramoni) by a British character Mr. Rogue (enacted by Shri Abhinash Kar).

Ardhendu Shekher Mustafi played major roles in various plays staged by the National Theatre. Unfortunately, the main leader of the public theatre movement Girish Chandra Ghosh did not join the National Theatre because he was of the view that the theatre should have its own building. Some of the other plays presented by the National theatre were 'Jamai Barik' and 'Bharat-Mata'. The differences among the founders of the first public theatre ultimately lead to the bifurcation of the National Theatre. One faction still got

Miss Binodini
Kalibini

itself registered as "National Theatre' and was headed by Girish Chandra Ghosh and Dharam Das Sur whereas the other faction started a new theatre by the name of the Hindu National Theatre in 1873. At the last performance before the bifurcation of the National Theatre on 8th March 1873, Mustafi presented his famous pantomime "Mustafi Saheb ka Pucka Tamasha" which was a reply to Dave Carson's pantomime in the "Opera House" titled 'Dave Carson Sahib ka Pucka Tamasha' where Carson used to imitate a 'Bengali Babu' by singing "I am a very good Bengali Babu". It was the same Dave Carson, who rendered a Hindi song for recording and replay when in 1878 the working of a phonograph was demonstrated before a crowd at the Dalhousie Institute in Calcutta by Herbert Harraden.

Subsequently, both the National Theatre and the Hindu National Theatre merged into one under the name and banner of the

Nabin Chandra Sen

'Great National Theatre' during 1873-74. Some of the important plays performed by the Great National Theatre were 'Kapal Kundala' (Dramatization of Bankim Chandra's novel); Umesh Chandra Mitra's 'Bidhawa Vibaha'; 'Sadhabar Ekadashi', 'Vidya Sunder' and 'Gajadananda and Yuvaraj'. Staging of the play "Gajadananda and Yuvaraj", a satire on the reception of the Prince of Wales- later King Edward VII, by a prominent Calcutta lawyer ultimately resulted in the promulgation of the draconian, The Dramatic performance Control Act, 1876. Under this Act the government authorities got vast powers to proscribe the staging of any play if it was felt to be not in public (actually in the government's) interest. The blow of this Act soon dismembered The Dramatic Committee of the Great National Theatre, but they immediately re-grouped and re-emerged in a new garb and under a new title, 'The National Theatre' under the stewardship of Girish Chandra Ghosh.

The nascent National Theatre (1877-86) staged a number of plays like Michael Madhusudan Datt's 'Meghnad Badh'; Nabin Chandra Sen's 'Palasir Yuddha', and dramatized versions of Bankim Chandra's three great novels, 'Mrinalini', 'Bishbriksha' and 'Durgeshnandini'. Some of the participating actors and actresses of this theatre were Girish Chandra Ghosh, Miss Binodini, Miss Kadambini, Amritlal Mitra and Motilal Sur. Another important play staged by the National Theatre was Girish Chandra Ghosh's 'Dol Leela'. However, owing to financial problems, National's owner, the great patron and pioneer of public theatres Bhuban Mohan Neogi, had to sell it to Marwari businessman Pratap Johuri. The new management of the company appointed Girish Chandra Ghosh as the new manager. Girish babu who till now was only an amateur and part-time actor, unstintingly devoted himself to the cause of Bengali theatre.

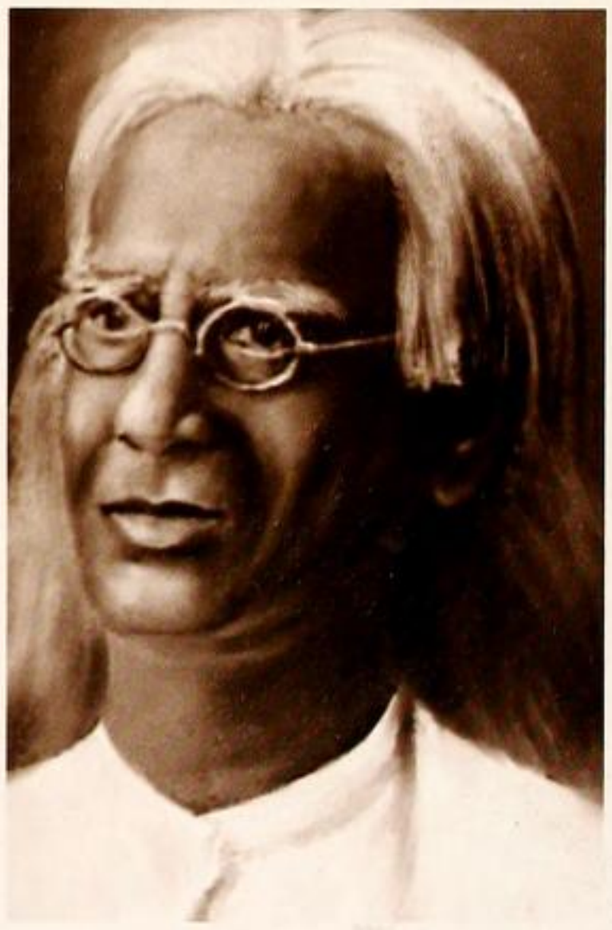
Known as Bengal's Garrick, Girish Babu (1844-1912) was a hands-on actor-dramatist, an efficient manager and a respected trainer-teacher. Though in the beginning, his first historical play 'Anand Rohe' (1881) failed to impress viewers, his subsequent efforts to dramatize mythological themes from Hindu scriptures proved hugely successful. He also penned a number of plays with social and historical themes. Accredited with writing about 80 plays, some of his important and notable plays are: 'Ravan Badha', 'Pandaver Agyantabas' (1883), 'Nala Damayanti' (1883), 'Chaitanya Leela' (1884), 'Bilwamangal' (1886), 'Billik Bazar' (1886), 'Abu Hossain' (1893), 'Prafulla' (1889) and 'Jana' (1893). His three important historical plays 'Siraj-ud-Daulah' (1905), 'Mirkasim' (1906) and 'Chatrapati Shivaji' (1907) were banned under the provisions of The Dramatic Performance Control Act, 1876 in January 1911. Influenced by the teachings of contemporary seer Shri Ramakrishna Paramhans, Girish Babu upheld morals and ideals through his writing and productions. His

son Surendranath Ghose alias Dani Babu too was a great actor and legendary figure of the Bengali theatre. In his first successful play 'Ravana Badh' he coined and introduced a new type of blank verse which had shorter lines and frequent pauses. This style was named after him as 'Girish-Chhando'.

Girish Chandra Ghosh, Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi, Amrit Lal Basu, Moti Lal Sur, Amrit Lal Mukherjee, Mohindra Basu-pioneers of public theatre in Bengal, theatre stalwarts-men who left very little record of their voices for posterity. Girish Chandra Ghosh, the architect of public theatre, who lived till 1912, does not appear to have left any recorded discs. His comrade Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi was recorded by William Conrad Gaisberg during the third Far Eastern recording tour of 1906-07. As a consequence his six recordings (record numbers G.C.-2-11066 to G.C.-2-11070 and G.C.-4-12521) in 10" size Gramophone Concert label records were released. These recordings mainly contained dialogues in Bengali from plays like 'Neeldarpan', 'Nabin Tapaswin', 'Manick Peer's Song', 'The Charitable Dispensary'.

The Charitable Dispensary by Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi

Amritlal Basu



Records by Mustafi from Minerva Theatre

Mustafi's dialogues were also released in the 10" size Gramophone concert Records bearing record numbers G.C.-2-11110 to G.C.- 2-11113 and G.C.-2-11116 to G.C.-2-11119. They mainly covered recordings from the plays 'Sadhakar Ekadashi' and 'Acsop's Fakles'. Amrit Lal Basu was recorded by Stephen Carl Porter and John Watson Hawd during 1904-05 for Nicole record label (record number C-261).

A contemporary of The National Theatre, The Bengal Theatre (1873-1901) was another important theatre. It was the first Bengali theatre to have its own building and to introduce a regular system of employing actresses. It introduced four actresses- Jagattarni, Golap (Sukumari), Elokeshi and Shyama. The Lebedeff and Shambazar Theatres permitted female characters to participate but such participations were not regular. Established by Sarat Chandra Ghose, a grandson of Shri Asutosh Deb, The Bengal Theatre took this bold step in consultation with Michael Madhusudan Datt. Datt's play 'Sharmistha', which introduced regular actresses, was staged on 16th Aug., 1873. A report in the Hindoo Patriot of August 18th, 1873 is a reflection of the response it received: "Mr. Michael Madhusudan Dutt's classic drama of Sharmistha was selected for the first performance. The actors performed their parts very creditably, with the two actresses. It is true that professional women join the jatras and nautches but we had hoped that the managers of Bengal Theatres would not bring themselves down to the level of the jatrawallas."

Bharat Samachar (issue dated 22nd August, 1873) regretted that "some from respectable families should act with women of the town." Englishman (issue dated 18th August, 1873) wrote, "though the actors and actresses performed successfully, it wished that drama could have done without actresses. It observed that in England females were brought in on stage in 1660- eighty four years after the opening of the public stage in 1576. In Calcutta on the other hand they were seen within a year."

In fact almost all the actresses came from the red light areas of Calcutta and it was difficult for contemporary society to bestow respectability on them. Even the progressives and reformers joined the band-wagon of protest. Michael Madhusudan Dutt had to face criticism even from Brahmo Samaj and Keshub Chandra Sen's journal 'Sulabh Samachar'

On Sarat Chandra Ghosh's demise in 1880, Biharilal Chatterjee became the main pillar of The Bengal Theatre. An accomplished actor and dramatist, Chatterjee's plays 'Pandav Nirbasan' (1867), 'Nanda Vidya' (1888) and 'Janmastami' (1889) ran to full houses; he also adapted Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel 'Durgeshnandini' for the stage. The Bengal Theatre continued to stage important plays and by 1890 it had

rechristened itself 'Royal Bengal Theatre'. Biharilal died in 1901 and with him died The Royal Bengal Theatre. Some important plays performed by The Bengal Theatre were: 'Durgeshnandini', 'Kapal Kundala', 'Shakuntala', 'Chandra Sekhar', 'Prahlad Charitra', 'Pandav Nirbason', and 'Nanda Vidya'. 'Shakuntala' was staged for a charitable purpose and was attended by the then Governor General Lord Lytton. Staged in 1884, Rajkrishna Roy's mythological 'Prahlad Charitra' was a grand success partially because the famous Bengali actress Kusum Kumari played the role of Prahlad. Binodini also played this role in other productions of the play but Kusum Kumari's performance as Prahlad continued to reign supreme in public imagination. In fact, another attempt to stage this play in 1894 by The Bengal Theatre did not succeed as Kusum Kumari did not act in it.

In this initial phase Bengali theatre had

more than one 'Kusum Kumari'. The one who played Prahlad in the Bengal Theatre was popularly known as 'Prahlad Kusi'. The other Kusum Kumari was 'Kusum Vishad' (Pathe-45935) who played the role of Saraswati in Girish Ghosh's drama 'Vishad'. The third Kusum Kumari played Marjina in the play 'Alibaba'. She acted in many of Amarendra Nath Dutta's plays and was popularly known as 'Marjina Kusum'. Another Kusum Kumari was known as 'Kusum Khonra'. In some of the early records Amarendra Nath Dutta and 'Marjina Kusum' sang duets together. Ironically this star of Bengali theatre was found begging outside Calcutta's Rang Mahal theatre in 1945.

Banbiharini alias Bhuni was another important actor of this period. She played the female lead in a number of plays like 'Durgeshnandini' (Tilottama);

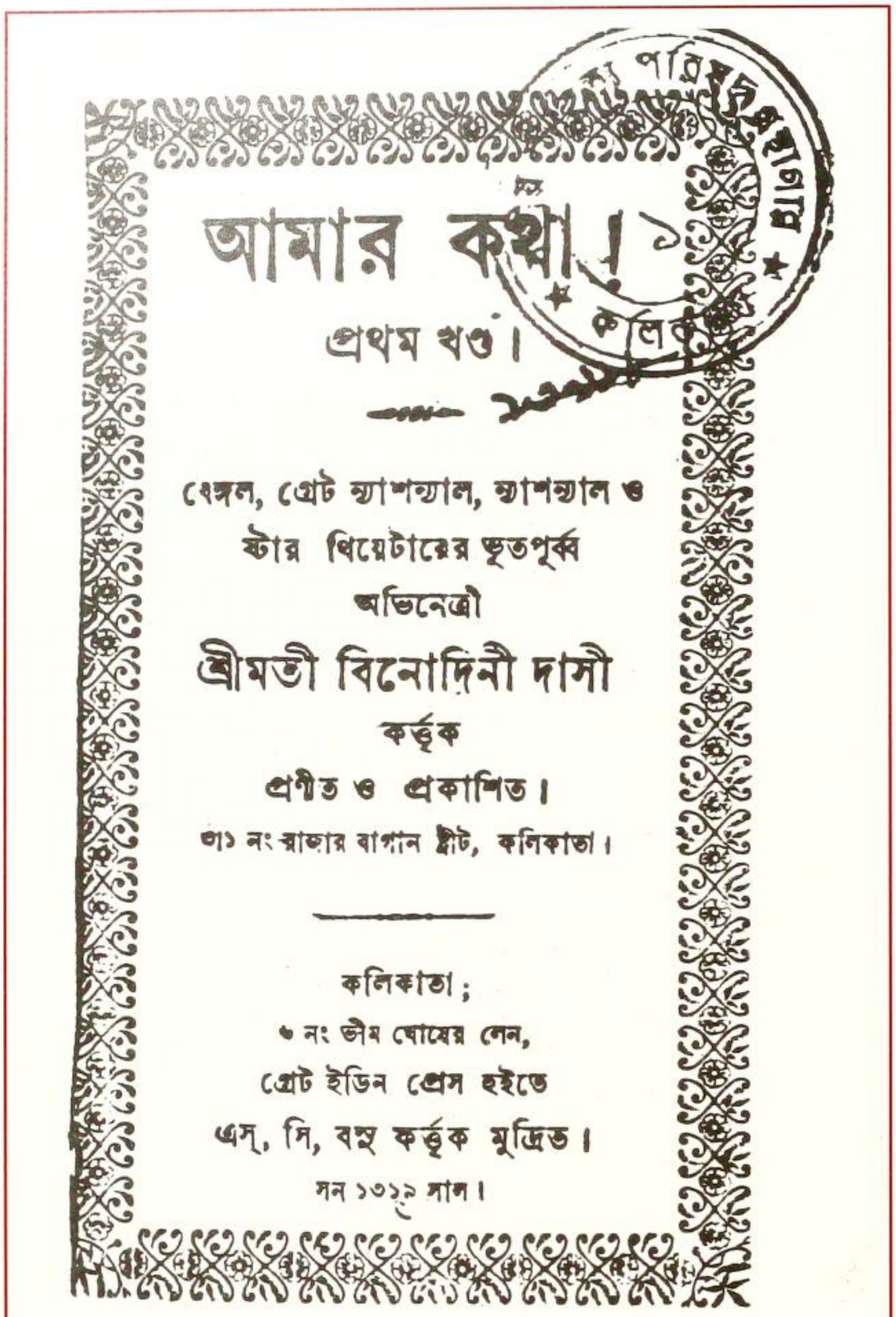
Kusum Kumari Vishad under Disque Pathe Record

'Chandrasekhar' (Dalini); 'Pandav Nirbasan' (Draupadi); and 'Chaitanyaleela' (Nityanand). Bhuni was recorded by Stephen Carl Porter at Calcutta during 1904-05, the song "Ekanto Hey Kanto Jabe Jibonanto" (record number C-345) under Nicole label is the lone sample of her voice.

The Royal Bengal Theatre bowed out by 1901 but Star Theatre (1888-1912), Minerva Theatre (1893-1912), Emerald Theatre (1887-96), City Theatre (1896-97) and Classic Theatre (1897-1906) had already established themselves before that. The Bengali theatre had by now acquired a certain level of respectability and glamour and attracted new talent.

Some of these theatres, which stepped into the 20th century, also encountered the recording experts of various sound recording companies. Recordings of artists and various plays staged by them in those days are today living testimonies of a Bengal of the yesteryears when public theatres were the greatest source of entertainment for the masses and their artists, acknowledged celebrities. The recording companies also printed their names in many of the records released by them, which carried the songs or titles of plays in which the artist belonging to these theatres had featured. In some cases bands or instrumental performances associated with these theatres were also chosen for recording and their records were released with due acknowledgement of the names of these theatres like records of 'Classic Theatre Band', 'Shambazar Concert Band' or instrumental performance by 'Members of Corinthian Theatre'. In fact various folk forms, theatrical performances and related songs as well as dialogues were the major source of entertainment for people before the introduction of the Talking Machine. Therefore, when sound recording companies introduced commercial recordings, they recorded a number of artists who were associated with theatres. Even records reflected names of artists, theatres, dramas and title of items, all in one. This was because the identity of an artist was linked to a theatre or sometimes a particular role in a play. With the passage of time when their records and the Talking Machines got them wider publicity, their records started appearing simply indicating their name and titles of their songs. Their musical capabilities were recognized by the public as well as the recording companies. Still Gramophone Company kept on releasing records of plays though sometimes with running serial numbers giving only the name of the play with no mention of the artists concerned.

Banbiharini


আমার কথা। ১

প্রথম খণ্ড।

বেঙ্গল, গ্রেট ন্যাশন্যাল, ন্যাশন্যাল ও
ষ্টার থিয়েটারের ভূতপূর্ব্ব
অভিনেত্রী
শ্রীমতী বিনোদিনী দাসী
কর্ত্তৃক
প্রণীত ও প্রকাশিত।
৩১ নং বাগবাজার ষ্ট্রীট, কলিকাতা।

কলিকাতা;
৬ নং ভীম ঘোষের লেন,
গ্রেট ইডিন প্রেস হইতে
এস্, সি, বসু কর্ত্তৃক মুদ্রিত।
সন ১৩১৯ সাল।

Aamar Katha, autobiography of Miss Binodini

The Star Theatre (1883-87) was established by young Calcutta businessman Gurumukh Rai who was in deep love with a promising young actress, Binodini. Miss Binodini was one of the most celebrated and talented artists of Bengali theatre. Her theatrical career began with The Great National Theatre production 'Satru Sanhar' in 1874. A protege of the great drama Guru Girish Ghosh, Binodini said good-bye to theatre in 1886 at the young age of twenty-three. Her autobiography 'Aamar Katha' provides glimpses of the turbulent life of this great actress. During her days with the National Theatre, Binodini was in a relationship with its owner Pratap Johari, but later accepted Gurumukh Rai as her patron. Rai had told Binodini he would name his soon to be established theatre 'B Theatre' after her. Driven by the desire to earn her place in the theatre world as an equal participant, Binodini plunged head-first into the project. For about an year the construction of the theatre building was her top priority-she even carried baskets of dug earth. But the lady was in for a shock: "As long as the theatre was not registered after completion of the construction, I was under the impression that it would be named after me. But the day they came back after registration, everything was finished. A few weeks more were left for opening of the theatre, I made an eager query, "what became the name of the theatre"? Dashubabu, with contentment replied, "It is Star". On hearing this, I was terribly hurt and broke down completely."[4]

The Star Theatre opened on 21st July, 1883, with Girish Babu's 'Daksha Yagna'. It mounted a number of successful productions and attracted new artists like Khetromoni, Gangamoni, Bhusan Kumari, Aghornath Pathak, Nilmadhab Chakravarty. Later the same year, Gurumukh Rai sold the Star Theatre and Amrit Lal Basu became its manager.

One milestone in the history of Bengali theatre was the presentation of Girish Ghosh's play "Chaitanya Leela" by Star Theatre in 1884. This play was based on Brindaban Das's 'Chaitanya Bhagabat'. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is considered the incarnation of Lord Vishnu by vaishnavites, he was also the founder of Vaishnavism in Bengal. In "Chaitanya Leela" Binodini appeared as 'Nimai' who renounced the world in search of God. Binodini's performance deeply moved the audience. The seer Shri Rama Krishna Paramhansa (1836-1886) who came to watch the show commended both Girish Chandra Ghosh and Binodini for the excellent presentation of this religious play. Apart from anointing the Bengali theatre and its practitioners with respectability,

this event proved to be a turning point for Girishbabu-he devoted himself to the task of educating the masses through theatre. 'Bilwamangal Thakur', Girish Chandra Ghose's devotional-biographical play drawn from the Hindi 'Bhaktamal' of Nanaji Das, staged at Star Theatre in 1886 is the story of a young man whose infatuation for a woman of the town (Chintamoni) is, under the impact of circumstances, ultimately transformed to love for the divine and a frantic search for Lord Krishna. Chintamoni also sees a new light, the sinners are redeemed by faith and devotion. Like Girish Chandra's earlier play 'Chaitanya Leela', 'Bilwamangal' also carried the message of love and sacrifice to achieve spiritual illumination. It made a tremendous impact on the audience at a time when the spirit of a more liberal Hindu religion was being resurrected under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The influence of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, whose disciple Girish Chandra had become, is evident in the drama".[5] For Binodini too, this became a water-shed moment; the talented, young artist who was at the peak of her career, left the stage forever in 1886 in pursuit of a spiritual life. Shri Rama Krishna Paramhansa's visit to Star Theatre also changed the public's perception about theatre. Theatres, which till now were shunned by respectable, middle-class people, began to be viewed in a different light; aided by this new recognition and support from every section of Bengal, they acquired an active role in generating awareness.

Here it is important to note that though Binodini bid the theatre good-bye in 1886 she lived till 1941. It is not clear whether Binodini continued to sing after 1886 and whether she made recordings with the

Star Theatre Opened on 21st July, 1883

Binodini Dasi

recording companies which started commercial recordings in India in 1902. The existence of certain records of Binodini Dassi complicates this issue. On Binodini, Rimli Bhattacharya writes: "It is not quite the case that Binodini Dasi completely faded out from public memory after her exit from the stage. Certainly she did not wish to. This is evident from the care that went into the production of the two editions of her autobiography: for example, the design of angels riding clouds and little cherubs at the end of each chapter and the attention lavished on the photographs (a portfolio of four art plats) in the second edition of My Story, BS1320. The introductory photograph shows her with a bouquet of flowers and a blouse with leg of

mutton sleeves, like any other contemporary bhadramahila. In her book, Binodini presents herself as a genteel woman writing her experiences. Yet, this did not mean a denial of her actress life. The Gatha, Kanak-o-Nalini (BS1312) was subtitled: "Presented by Srimati Binodini Dasi the ex-actress of the National and the Star Theatres', while the subtitles to both editions of the autobiography read: 'Presented by the ex-actress of the Bengal, the Great National, the National and the Star Theatre, Srimati Binodini Dasi'. (The book must have sold very well for it to have been published by the well-known Bengal Medical Library in its second version the following year.)"[6] It is amply clear that Binodini, though she left the stage in 1886, did not shun an active life. Since drama and music were her first love, she might have sung for recording companies after all.

Miss Benodini Dassi: Gramophone Concert Record

In this context, the list of recordings published by Mr. Michael Kinnear in his book "The Gramophone Company's First India Recordings" (1899-1908), refers to two Binodinis. The first Binodini has been identified as Binodini (Handi) who worked for National, Classic and Kohinoor Theatres and was a ballet girl. She also performed in plays like Siraj-ud-Daula, Indira etc. and had been recorded during the first tour of F.W. Gaisberg. Some of her songs were issued under record numbers 13198 (7", Gramophone Record) and 13116 (10", Gramophone Concert Record). The second Binodini Dassi, was recorded during the 1904-05 recording session of William Sinkler Darby at Calcutta. Her 7" size records were issued under

Miss Binodini Dasi: Gramophone Concert Record

record numbers 13626 to 13636. Some of her 10" size records under the label "Gramophone Concert Record" were issued under record numbers GC-13877 (Sindhu Gat); GC-13878 (Iman Bhupali Qawali); GC-13879 (Telana Hambir-Dhima Telana); GC-13880 (Hambir) and GC-13883 (Khambaj Khemta); A third Binodini-Binodini Dasi alias Patla- is represented by record number GC-12-13281 and G.C.-12-13282. A fourth Binodini was known as 'Kali Bini'. She was recorded by Stephen Carl Porter during 1904-05. Record number C-356 presents a Kirtan "Ami Bhaktar Bhoyey Ghatey Ghatey". Nicole Records also show a number of recordings of a Miss Binodini Dassi other than Miss Binodini Dassi (Kali Bini). Miss Binodini's Nicole records are represented by record numbers C-22, C-23 with the lyrics "Balika Boyose Chilam Swadhin (Bengalee)", C-25, with the lyrics "Bujhechi Aami Tar (Bengalee)", C-113, with the lyrics "Key Aachey Tomarey Moni (Bengalee)" and C-350, with the lyrics "Cheona Cheona Adike Cheona (Bengalee)". The clear identification of four Binodinis and separate reporting of their records in the list of Gramophone and Nicole Company's releases indicates that the fourth Binodini (other than Binodini (Handi), Binodini (Patla) and Binodini (Kali Bini)) was the same Binodini who left the stage in 1886, otherwise the name in these records or their lists would have indicated the nickname as has been done in the case of 'Handi', 'Patla' and 'Kali Bini'. She possessed a fine voice with an excellent classical base. Apart from these, Binodini recording are also found under the Beka Grand label (record numbers 21856, 21857, 21837 and 21838 to mention a few). The co-artist with Binodini is S.N. Ghosh. Her recordings in Beka labels with S.N. Ghosh also point to the possibility of her recording with her revered mentor Girish Babu's illustrious son Surendra Nath Ghosh (S.N. Ghosh) alias Danibaboo (1868-1932). Surendra Nath Ghosh was a legendary figure of the Bengali theatre and an immensely popular artist. He joined the stage in 1890 and performed in a number

Mr. S. N. Ghose and Miss Binodini: Beka Grand Record

1

2

3

1,2 Mr. S. N. Ghose and Binodini: Beka Grand Record

3. Babu Satya Gopal and Miss Kiran, Calcutta: Nicole Record

S. N. Ghose and Binodini: Disque Pathe record

of Star, Manmohan, Minerva and Classic theatres productions. Hardly any recordings of Danibaboo are found in Gramophone labels. He is said to have cut many records for Nicole records. Some experts believe that the Babu Satya Gopal Ghosh featured in record number C-255 of the play "Rezia" (credited to "Babu Satya Gopal Ghosh & Miss Kiron") (Inadvertently referred to as that of Miss Tarasundari Dassi by Mr. Michael Kinnear in his book Nicole Records) is none other than Surendra Nath Ghosh alias Danibaboo. This appears to be a little far-fetched because under no circumstances would a recording company want to hide the identity of Danibaboo who was a very well-known performer and some thing of a star in his day. Another possibility of Dani Babu and Binodini's recordings comes from Pathe record number 45628 of the play 'Rezia'.

The Star Theatre located at 68, Beadon Street Calcutta, shifted to a new location at Hathibagan where it started mounting shows with effect from 25th May, 1888. This theatre continued to present plays till 1912. Some major plays performed at Star were: Prafulla, Haranidhi , Nand Bidya, Dhrub Charitra ( Girish Chandra Ghosh); Chandra Sekhar (Bankim Chandra

Dwijendra Lal Roy

Chatterjee); Ananda Mangal (Nrityagopal Kabiraj); Harish Chandra (Kunja Bihari Bose); Pratapaditya (Khirode Prasad Vidyavinode); Rana Pratap, Biraha (Dvijendra Lal Roy); Khasdakhal (Amrit Lal Basu); Raja Bahadur (Amrit Lal Gupta); Laila Majnu ( Raja Krishna (Roy); Rani Bhabani (Amarendra Nath Datta); Sudama (Aparesh Chandra Mukherjee); Jadukari (Amritlal Bose); Karnarjun (Aparesh Chandra Mukherjee); and Chir Kumar Sabha (Rabindra Nath Tagore).

In 1898, the Star Theatre started the innovative practice of a "bioscope" show, then a novelty, when after Amritlal Bose's "Babu" a few scenes were shown on the screen through a bioscope which included the funeral procession of Mr. Gladstone, the Prime Minister of England, and the Diamond Jubilee Procession of Queen Victoria".[7] In those days theatrical performances were advertised in newspapers well in advance to attract the public. An example is the advertisement for the opera "Ananda Mangal", published in a newspaper dated 25th December, 1901: "Tonight the Star Theatre will be again illuminated and an opera "Anand Mangal" to be followed by Babu A.L. Bose's new Christmas sketch "Avtar" will be introduced under the patronage of the Maharaja of Burdwan." Another advertisement in The Amrit Bazar Patrika of 14th August 1903 advertised the staging

Maharaja of Burdwan

of a new play 'Pratapaditya' of Babu Kshirode Prasad Vidyavinode by Star Theatre. A portion of the advertisement read: "one of the most conspicuous out of the many/benefits we have received from the English Nation/ is that of resuscitating for us our own history/ and educating the children of the soil in it/Pratapaditya and the ruins of his capital/would probably have remained a myth,/ but for the unflagging energy and thirst for/ research inborn in an English mind/ Besides the historical characters/necessary for the purpose of the play the/author has very ingeniously has shed a Divine Halo on the whole drama."

1905 was a politically crucial year, there was great political unrest due to Lord Curzon's plan to partition Bengal. The Star Theatre advertised the play "Rana Pratap", the patriotic drama of Dwijendra Lal Roy in the "Amrit Bazar Patrika" dated July 22, 1905: "A new Historical play/ RANA PRATAP/ STAR THEATRE/ Saturday 22nd July at 09:00 P.M./ Mr. D.L. Roy's New Historical Play/RANA PRATAP/ The Great name of the author itself a/ guarantee of the excellence of the piece/ we talk of Garibaldi, Napoleon, Nelson and/ Wellington and our tongues are eloquent about the patriotism/ and heroism of Japan; but in strict/ observance of the old adage, "The beggar of the village receives no alms", we often forget the ideal heroes and patriots of our own coun-

Amarendra Nath Dutt

try./ RANA PRATAP/ has deified the name of "Pratap" by his/ almost divine deeds."

The Star Theatre did well till 1912. After Girish Chandra Ghosh's demise, Star Theatre went into decline. However, this phase of decline was all pervasive and many other contemporary theatres of Bengal also experienced it. One possible reason for this decline was perhaps the strict implementation of The Dramatic Performance Control Act (1876).

Performance of a number of plays with nationalistic leanings was proscribed. This was also the time when a number of veteran artists and playwrites of the Bengali theatre either retired or passed away.

Minerva Theatre was perhaps the major casualty of this phase of decline. It presented almost eighty plays in the almost three decades of its existence. Some important Minerva productions were: Girish Chandra Ghosh's adaptation of Macbeth; Abu Hossain, Jana, Tapobal, Prafulla, Siraj Ud-daulah, Balidan, Chhatrapati Sivajee (Girish Chandra Ghosh); Chandra Gupta, Sinhal Bijoy, Saha-Jahan, Rana Pratap, Hinda Hafiz and Durga Das ( Dwijendra Lal Roy); Kinnari, Alibaba, Julia (Kshirod Prasad Vidyavinode); Ananda Math, Sitaram (Bankim Chandra Chatterjee); Sirin Farhad (Atul Krishna Mitra).

Most Minerva productions had historical themes and upheld the values of honour and freedom. Minerva's lifetime coincided with the resurgence of national pride and the movement against the partition of Bengal. Minerva Theatre contributed to these causes. An advertisement in the magazine "Bengalee" dated 6th September, 1905 is witness to Minerva Theatre's solidarity with the anti-partition movement. The advertisement read: "NATIONAL MOURNING / at the MINERVA THEATRE / 6, Beadon Street/ There will be no performance on Wednesday, the 6th September, as the Nation / has gone into mourning on account of / The Partition proclamation / G.C. Ghose, Director". Star Theatre too observed a closure on this day.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the leading national figure, attended a performance of Girish Chandra Ghose's play "Siraj-ud-daulah" there. This was advertised in the magazine "Bengalee" on 9th June, 1906: "The Minerva Theatre/6, Beadon Street Calcutta/Saturday the 9th June at 9.00P.M. sharp/The twenty-eighth performance of/G.C. Ghosh's Historical Drama/ SERAJUDDOWLA/ Karim-Girish Chandra Ghosh/ next day, Sunday at Candle-light/ I. Bunkim Chandra's grand master-piece/ DURGESHNANDINI/ OR/ The Chieftain's Daughter/ II. ALIBABA/ III. THE MINERVA BIOSCOPE/ All new pictures throughout/ A.S. Mustafi/ Master G.C. Ghosh/ Manager/ "In honour of the venerable Maharastra/ Patriots Srijut Balgangadhar Tilak of Poona,/ Shri Krishna Kaparde of Amraoti, Dr. Munje of/ Nagpore and other distinguished and renowned/ visitors who have kindly consented to grace our pavilion with their presence."

As Tilak entered the auditorium, Ghosh, who was on the stage, knelt in respectful obeisance to the revered leader and the whole house rose in silence. Tilak sat through the performance and congratulated the dramatist and the theatre for presenting such a patriotic play. Alarmed by the enthusiasm created by Ghosh's play, British authorities banned "Siraj-ud-daulah" after a few performances. The same fate awaited Girish Babu's two other historical plays-Mirkasim and Chattrapati Shivaji.[8]

The Minerva Theatre missed no chance of grabbing viewer's attention, it once advertised the appearance of one of its famous actresses Miss Susheela with a Sunderban Tiger, in another they advertised to show the scenes of the Russo-Japanese war through Bioscope.

In May 1903, Amarendra Nath Dutt of the Classic Theatre took over the Minerva Theatre on lease for three years and staged popular plays like 'Raja-o-Rani', 'Raghubir', 'Anandamath' but he was forced to transfer the lease to Man Mohan Pandey in 1904 due to financial burden. Amarendra Nath Dutt, who belonged to a Zamindar family of Bengal, was a versatile theatre personality who made his debut as an amateur actor in 1895 with the play 'Palashir Yuddha'. Afterwards, he established the Calssic Theatre. 'Nala - Damayanti' was the first play staged at

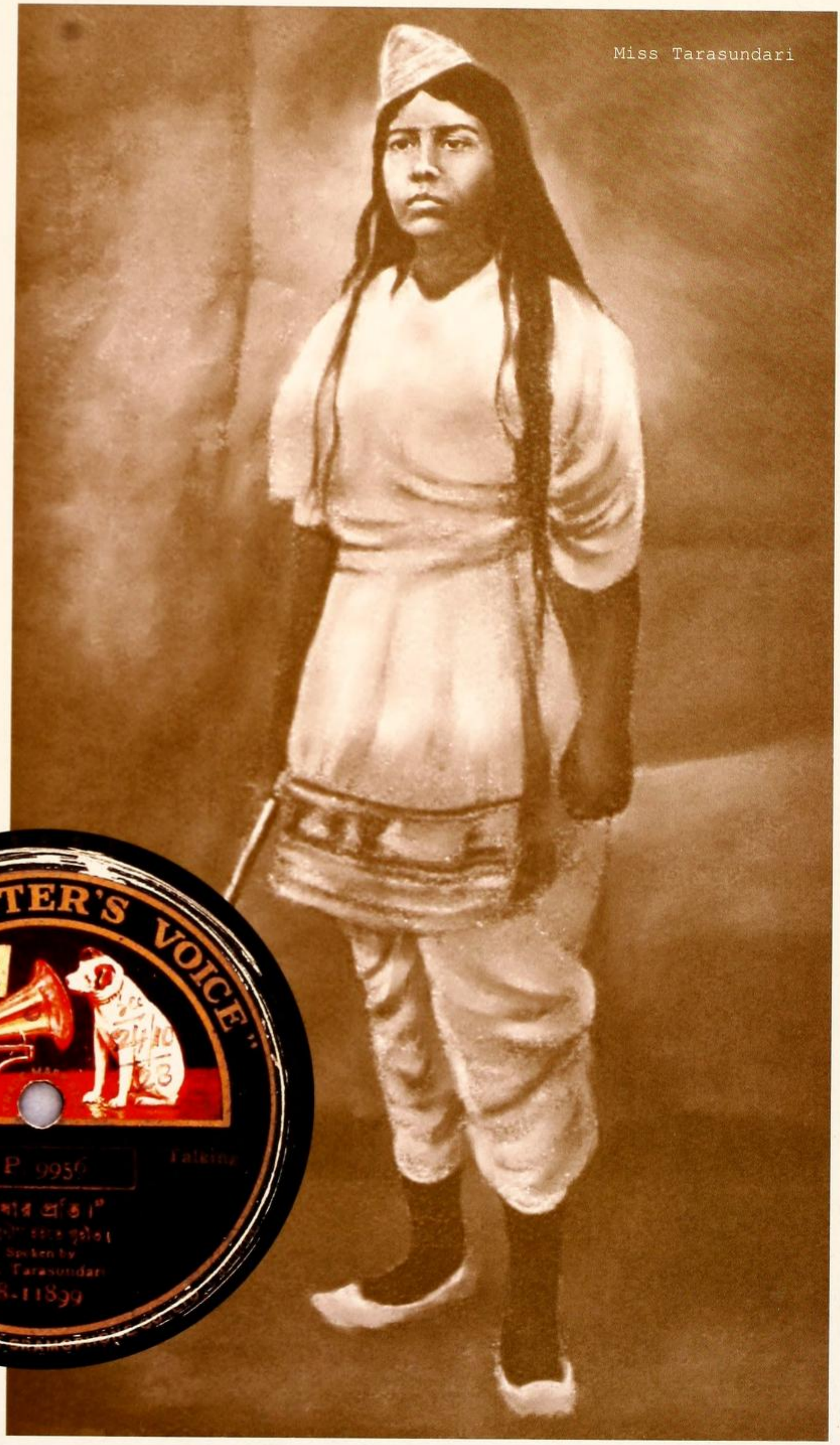
this theatre. Dutt acted in a number of plays like "Anandamath' (as Jibanananda); 'Raja-o-Rani' (as Vikramdev) 'Siraj-ud-daula' (as Siraj-ud-daula); 'Bhramar' (as Govindalal), 'Alibaba' (as Hussain); 'Indra' (as Upendra); 'Prithiwiraj' (as Prithwiraj); 'Khasdakhal' (as Mohit); 'Debi Chaudhurani' (as Brojeshwar); 'Pandav Gaurav' (as Bhim); 'Srikrishna', 'Torubala' and Buddha. He wrote acclaimed plays like 'Dol Leela' (1889) and 'Nirmal' (1898) and adapted and staged Ravindra Nath Tagore's novel 'Chokherbali' and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel 'Devi Chaudhurani'.

The Classic Theatre (1897-1906) became very popular, one of the reasons of its popularity was Dutt's pairing as a hero with popular actors like Miss Tarasundari and Miss Kusum Kumari (Marjina). During his tenure The Classic Theatre staged a mixed bag of new and old plays.

The Classic Theatre was a competitor of The Star and Minerva. In order to attract viewers, it used creative gimmicks. One interesting Classic advertisement in the newspaper 'Bengali' dated 24th December-1903 reads: "Grand competition for correct recitation of a certain passage from Michael's "Meghanad Badh". Any twenty out of the audience would be asked to recite. Our dramatist - the Father of the Native Stage Babu Girish Chandra Ghosh has been asked to be the examiner. The best recite, the first man will get a Gold watch as a Xmas "Souvenir" of the Classic Theatre. The second best will get a Silver Watch as memento of merry 'X' mas". Though there were many laurels to the credit of the Classic Theatre and its owner Amarendra Babu but the year 1905 was a particularly bad year for the Classic Theatre and Shri Amerandra Nath Dutt. After two short plays i.e. 'Konta Ke' ( a farce staged on 21st January) and 'Sibaratri' (an opera by Amerendra Nath Dutt staged on 4th March), Amarendra Nath's proprietorship of the Classic Theatre ended as a result of debts and litigations. His last performance was on 2nd April, 1905."[9]

Soon, Amarendra Babu was summoned back to Manage Classic Theatre on a monthly salary. On 21st October, 1905, 'The Statesman' reported: "The old Bird in his own nest / BABU AMARENDRANATH DUTT / Again on the board of / THE CLASSIC THEATRE 68, BEADON STREET / Saturday, the 21st October, at 9.00P.M. / PRITHWIRAJ followed by / BAHUT ACCHHA / To wind up with an exhibition of / The Royal Bioscope / including the "Partition of Bengal" scene at / the great Town Hall meeting for the first time / on the Bengalee stage / next day Sunday, at candle-light / THE ROYAL BIOSCOPE / including the "partition" scene / to be followed by / HARIRAJ AND ALIBABA / Babus A.N. Dutt, and Nripendra C. Bose and / Miss Kusum Kumari and others in their wanted / characters in the plays put up. / It is earnestly to be hoped that old patrons and / friends of my humble self will continue their / favour on me at this my old place / A.C. Ray, Receiver A.N. Dutt, Manager."

"Amarendra Nath Dutt created a new style in theatre publicity which was in vogue till a new era of the public theatre began in the early twenties of the 20th century. He was also the first to start theatre magazines. He himself edited 'Sourav', 'Rangalaya', 'Natyyamandir', and 'Theatre', and spent a lot of money in publishing them. Classic also gave presents to its patrons. But it was not merely in such innovations that Amarendra Nath spent money. He was perhaps the first among theatre proprietors to sympathetically consider the financial needs of the staff. He increased their pay and arranged benefit rights for those in need. The innate aristocracy in Amarendra Nath prevented him from being a successful businessman in the theatre. Generous and unsuspecting on the one hand, and extravagant and pleasure-loving on the other, Amarendra Nath fell a natural victim to his own failings


Miss Tarasundari
"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"
3
P 9956
"শঙ্খের প্রতি।"
Spoken by
Miss Tarasundari
8-11899

Amarendra Nath Dutt
and Kusum Kumari:
"His Master's Voice"

and bowed out prematurely from the stage of life in 1916, when he was only forty, but not without leaving a name in the history of the theatre as a dedicated Thespian".(10)

Dutt was first recorded by George Walter Dillnutt on behalf of the Gramophone Company Ltd. during 1908-09. He was one of the theatre personalities who guided and counseled Frederick William Gaisberg when he visited Calcutta in 1902. Most of his recordings are duets from some popular plays of the Star Theatres that he sang with Kusum Kumari (Marjina): record numbers G.C.-8-14018,

Amarendra Nath Dutt and Kusum Kumari: Gramophone Concert Record

from 'Bahut Achha'; G.C.-8-11057, from 'Hariraj'; G.C.-2-11153, from 'Siraj-ud-Daula'; G.C.-2-11155, from 'Pandav Gaurav'; G.C.-2-11156, from 'Bharamar'; G.C.-8-11055, from 'Kapalkundla'; and G.C.-8-11056, from 'Nal Damayanti'. Dutt also cut at least one record with Monmohan Goswami (record number G.C.-8-11058, from 'Buddha') who acted in Minerva, Classic and Star productions. A graduate of the Calcutta University, Goswami's records present his name as 'M. Goswami, B.A'. He acted in a wide range of plays like 'Siraj-ud-Daula', 'Prithviraj', 'Bajirao', 'Durgadas', 'Chokher Bali' and 'Buddha'.

Kusum Kumari (Marjina) and Amarendra Nath Dutt also recorded some records with N.C. Bose (1867-1927) popularly known as Nepa Bose who acted in Classic, Bengal, Star and Natyya Mandir Theatres of Calcutta. Bose was an accomplished choreographer and played Abdullah in the play Alibaba with Kusum Kumari (Marjina). Some of his other famous plays were 'Kinnari', 'Prithviraj', 'Shirin-Farhad', 'Prafulla', 'Ahalya Bai' and 'Alamgir'. Record number G.C.-2-14261 presents N.C. Bose with Kusum Kumari in 'Dol Leela' and record number G.C.-2-14262 in the drama 'Holo Kie'. Nepa Bose had also been recorded during the first recording session of 1902 by Frederick William Gaisberg. The 7" sized record number 12363 (from the play 'Bellick Bajar') and 10" sized Gramophone Concert Record number G.C.-12259 (from the play 'Aladdin') were products from this recording session.

A famous contemporary of Dutt was Miss Tarasundari. She acted with Girish Chandra Ghosh (in 'Balidan'), with his son Dani Babu (in 'Rana Pratap'), with Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi (in Siraj-ud-Daula and Durgeshnandini) and with

Amarendra Nath Dutt and Kusum Kumari: Gramophone Concert Record

N. C. Bose and Kusum Kumari: Gramophone Concert Record

Amarendra Nath Dutt (in Nal Damayanti). She debuted as an actress at the age of seven and with Miss Binodini Dassi and Tinkari Dassi (Sr.) formed the great trinity of the old Bengali theatre. Reviewing her performance in the play 'Rezia' 'The Statesman' wrote: " not merely in the refinement and delicacy of their deportment on the stage, but equally also in the quality of their art some of our actresses could well hold their own in competition with the best representatives of the English Stage. Those who have seen the part of Reziya as it is played by Shrimati Tarasundaree, will bear out the truth of this statement. Reziya is one of the most complex characters met within any literature. Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth comes very close to it. But even Lady Macbeth is possibly a shade simpler than Reziya and Tara's rendering of Rezia has been declared by competent critics, who have seen the best European actresses, to be as good an achievement as the most capable of English actresses... ("The Bengalee Stage" 'the Hindu Review' February 1913, reprinted in Bohurupee Patrika, March 1974, No. 42). Some of her famous characters were- Reziya (in Reziya); Profulla (in Debi Chaudharani); Chintamoni (in Bilwamangal Thakur) and Desdemona (in Othello). Tarasundari was first recorded for Nicole records by Stephen Carl Porter in 1904 (record numbers C-254 and C-256); later, H.M.V. too recorded her. Tarasundari spent the last phase of her life in an ashram of the Ramakrishna Mission at Bhubaneswar.

Kasi Nath Chaterjee, Aghor Pathak, Miss Jadumoni Dassi, Miss Kironsoshi, Miss Susheelabala Dassi, Miss Hiranyamoyee Dassi, Miss Narisundari, Miss Gangamoni and Miss Khetramoni were some other prominent contemporaries of Amarendra Nath Dutt. Jadumoni Dassi worked for the Great, National and Bengal theatres and was one of the first handful of actors to join the public theatre. She was an excellent singer and acted in

Miss Tarasundari:
His Master's Voice

Miss Tarasundari

Jaadu Moni Dassi, Calcutta: Gramophone Concert Record

plays like 'Sati-Ki-Kalankini', 'Anand Kanan'. Charles Capwell wrote that the initial success of the play 'Sati-Ki-Kalankini' owed much of its success to the talent of its leading lady Jadumoni Dassi, a protégé of Saurindro Mohan Tagore and selected from amongst his servants' offsprings. She was too serious a singer to continue with a stage career, even a musical one, and she retired to become one of Calcutta's most admired singers; when she entertained, many fashionable men of Calcutta had to be turned away from her salon. At some point in her life, misfortune befell her and she was reduced to begging on the streets. She was discov-

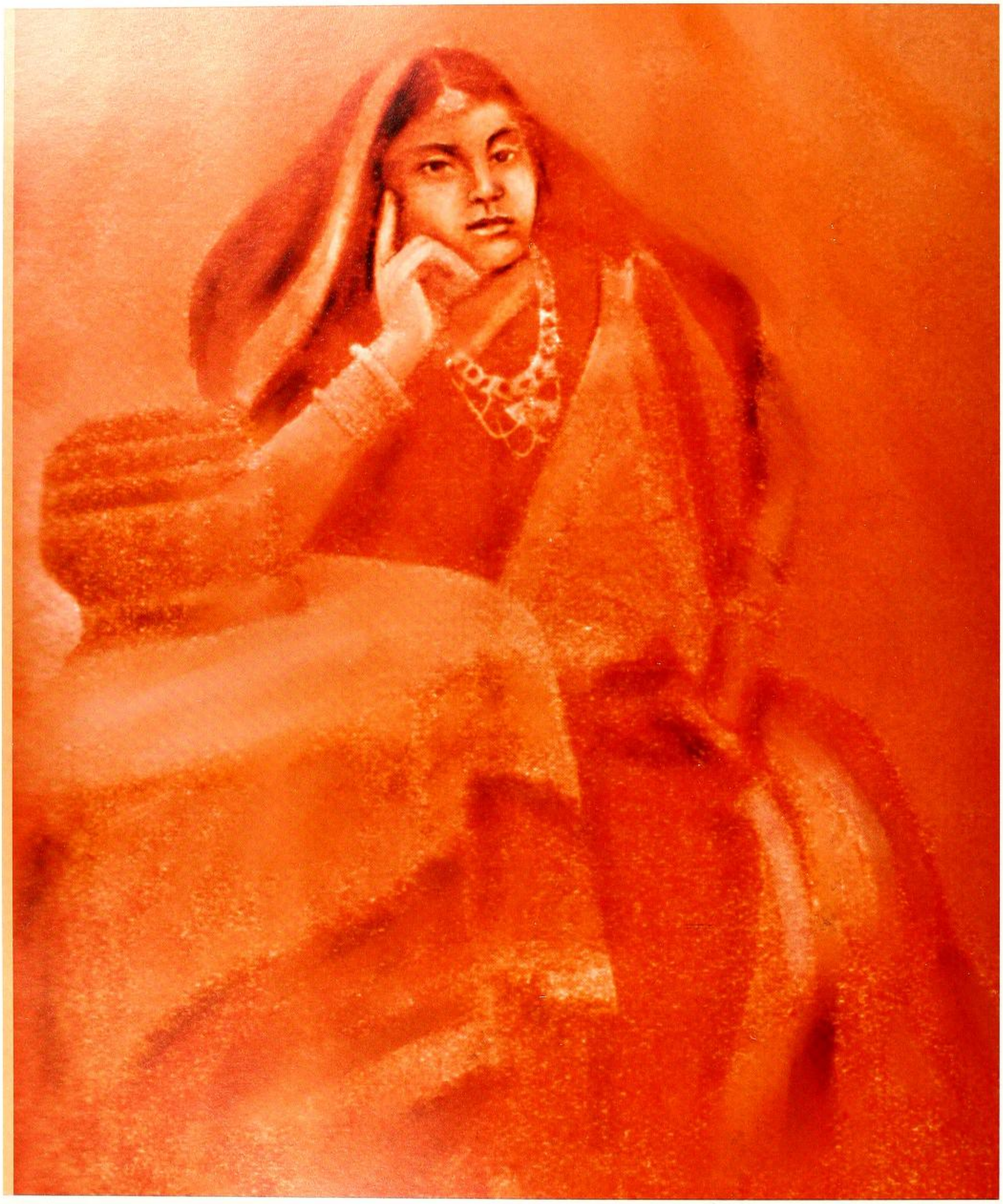
ered there one day by a young music and theatre enthusiast who recognized that her voice must at one time have been special. On learning her identity, he became her benefactor establishing a small school for her. The song she used to sing to solicit alms on the street, "Dukkho hara, tara tomar" is preserved in the 7" size record number 2-12296 of Baroa Kawali. She was recorded by William Sinkler Darby at Calcutta, between December 1904 and March 1905. Subsequently, three of her records (record numbers 2-12295, 2-12296, 2-12297) were released as 7" sized Gramophone Records and nine (record numbers G.C-13895 to G.C.-13903) as

Hiranmoyee Baijee: Nicole Record

10" sized Gramophone Concert Records. Jadumani Dassi was also recorded for the Nicole label (record numbers C-103, C-354 and C-355). Miss Hiranyamoyee Dassi was also recorded for Nicole Records during the same session (Nicole Record number C-171).

Another contemporary actor was Sushila (actually four Susheelas- Susheelabala (Sr.), Susheelabala (Jr.), Susheelasundari and Miss Sushila). Susheelabala (Sr.)

Sushilabala sr.



Sushila Bala Dasi,
Minerva Theatre:
Nicole Record

Sushila

appeared in Great, National, Classic and Star Theatre productions and was a very popular singer. She was active on the theatre scene till 1915 and acted in hit plays like 'Rana Pratap', 'Siraj-ud-Daula', 'Durgeshnandini'. Her Nicole record (number C-491) and record numbers GC-3-13525 and GC-3 -13567 are testimony of her great command of music. Susheelabala (Jr.) was basically a dancer

Sushila, Minerva Theatre: Gramophone Concert Record

Miss sushila

Sushila: Disque
Pathe Record

who also acted in productions of the old Star Theatre. Susheelasundari Dassi was associated with Minerva and Man Mohan Theatres and acted in plays like 'Chirkumar Sabha', 'Nadirshah' etc. She is represented by Record Numbers G.C.-3-13484 and G.C-3-13709.

Miss Sushila was recorded during the third far eastern recording tour of William Conrad Gaisberg and three 10" sized Gramophone Concert Records (record numbers G.C-3-13469, G.C-3-13470 and G.C.-3-13471) of her performances were released. She also has a Pathe record (number 36305) to her credit.

Miss Kiranbala

The Gramophone and Nicole companies released many records of a Miss Kiron who acted in plays like 'Moner Matan', 'Balidan', 'Mrinalini', 'Pandaver Agyatabas' and 'Fatikjal'. She was was also known as Miss Kironbala and

worked for The Classic and Minerva theatres. Frederick William Gaisberg recorded some of her pieces from popular plays during 1902-1903. Record numbers G.C.-13196 and G.C-13085 (pieces from Fatikjal) and record number 13197 (pieces from 'Moner Matan') were released as 7" and 10" sized records. Kiron was also recorded by William Gaisberg during 1906-1907 who focused on her independent numbers. Her records are also available under Nicole label (record numbers C-117, C-257 to C-259 and C-346) and Pathe (record number 45930). Pathe also recorded Miss Kironshoshi (record number 45595) who started her career with Emerald Theatre and acted in plays like 'Pandav Nirbasan' (Bhanumati) and 'Purna Chandra '(Sundari). As a matter of fact, 'Kiron' seems to be a popular name amongst female actors of that generation. When Binodini left the stage, the void was filled-in by a Miss Kironbala who worked for the Star, Minerva and Classic theatres and acted in plays like 'Prafulla', 'Chaitanyaleela' and 'Harnidhi'. However, her untimely death at the age of twenty-two deprived the Bengali theatre of a

Kiran Bala: Disque Pathe Record

promising artist. Another Miss Kiron Banerjee acted in historical plays like 'Neeldarpan', 'Durgeshnandini' and 'Meghnad Badh' staged by the National and Bengal theatres. One more Kiron known as Kironbala alias 'Tala' was with The Kohinoor Theatre and acted in plays like 'Chand Bibi' and 'Mayur Sinhasan'.

Narisundari acted for Star and Minerva Theatres. She was a celebrated songstress of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Narisundari's name lives on specially for her songs as Dalani Begum in Chandrasekhar (Star, 1894), Bejoya in 'Pratpaditya' (Star,1903) and Chhaya in 'Chadragupta' (Minerva, 1911). Apparently, Narisundari's rendering of 'Aju Kanha Meri' (Record Number G.C.-3-13499) was a major attraction of the play because after Dalani Begum poured her heart out in the song, the auditorium would invariably become half empty. Her other important roles were- Meherunnesa (in 'Rana Pratap'), Ganga Bai (in 'Ahalya Bai'), Leela (in 'Sinhal Bejoy') and Kinnari (in 'Kinnari'). Stephen Carl Porter and John Watson Hawd recorded her song

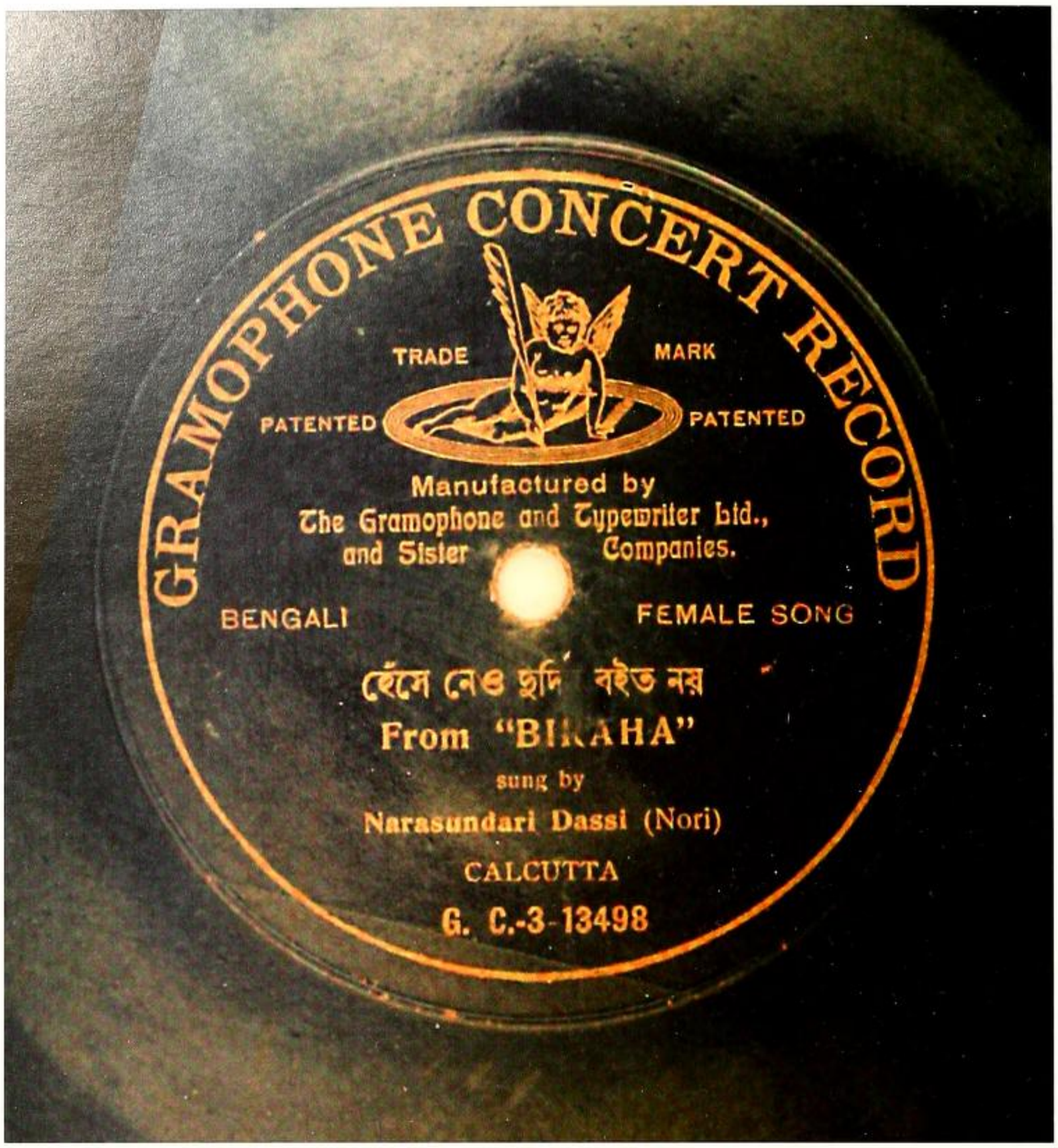
Kiran Soshee (Hizlie): Disque Pathe Record

Narisundari Dasi

'Sey Mukh Keno Oho Raha Money Pran', from the play 'Kamaley Kamini' (record number C-600) in 1904-05 for the Nicole record label. The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. recording experts William Conrad Gaisberg and George Dillnutt recorded her sixteen songs during 1906-07 at Calcutta, fifteen of which were released under 10"sized Gramophone Concert Records (record number G.C-3-13494 to G.C-3-13500, G.C-3-13543 to G.C-3-13548, G.C-3-13710 and G.C-3-13711)and one under 12"sized Gramophone Monarch Record(record number 013129). She was also known by the nickname 'Nori' and her recorded songs were from some of her popular plays like 'Chandrasekhar', 'Rana Pratap', 'Jadukari' and 'Pratapaditya'.

Miss Khetramoni and Miss Gangamoni were associated with the Great National, National and Star theatres. Gangamoni, also known as Ganga Bai, was brought up by Binodini Dassi's grandmother and was her childhood companion. They called each other by a nickname 'Golap'. Gangamoni in due course became a celebrated singer-actress at the Star Theatre. Miss Khetramoni was a natural actress, a senior British officer is said to have appreciated her performance and complimented her saying actresses like her were scarce even in England.

Narisundari Dasi: Gramophone Concert Record




Narisundari Dasi: Gramophone Concert Record

The Emerald Theatre, established by Gopal Lal Seal, was another important contemporary theatre. Seal bought the land on which The Star Theatre stood at 68 Beadon Street, as a consequence Star shifted to Hathi Bagan, Calcutta, and Seal started the Emerald Theatre in the building of the old Star Theatre. Though Emerald staged popular plays like 'Pandav Nirbasan', 'Neeeldarpan', 'Purna Chandra' and 'Gadha-O-Toomi' it failed to remain in business and was forced to close shop by 1896. Apart from this, Kohinoor Theatre (1907-12), Aurora Theatre (1901-02), Unique Theatre (1903-04), National Theatre II (1905-11), Great National Theatre II (1911), Grand National II(1911-14), Thespian Temple (1915-16), Presidency Theatre (1917-18) were actively propagating Bengali theatre in Calcutta. Some important productions of these theatres were: 'Rani Durgabati', 'Chandbibi', 'Baruna', 'Sonar Sansar', 'Ekata', 'Daulat-e-Dunia (Kohinoor Theatre); 'Julia', 'Agamoni', 'Heerarphool' (Aurora Theatre); 'Tarabai', 'Torubala', 'Kal Parinoy' (Unique theatre); 'Bharat Gaurab', 'Banabla', 'Tulsidas' (National Theatre -II); 'Jibane-Marane', 'Bajirao', 'Aha Mori' (Great National Theatre - II); 'Rajlakshmi', 'Joydeb', 'Parvati Parinay' (Grand National-II); 'Nurmahal', 'Roma', 'Hamir' (Thespian Temple) and 'Bangalee', 'Paltan', 'Nisar Swapan', 'Babar Shah' (Presidency Theatre Ltd.)

Dramatists and playwrites like Ramanarayan Tarkratna (1822-86);

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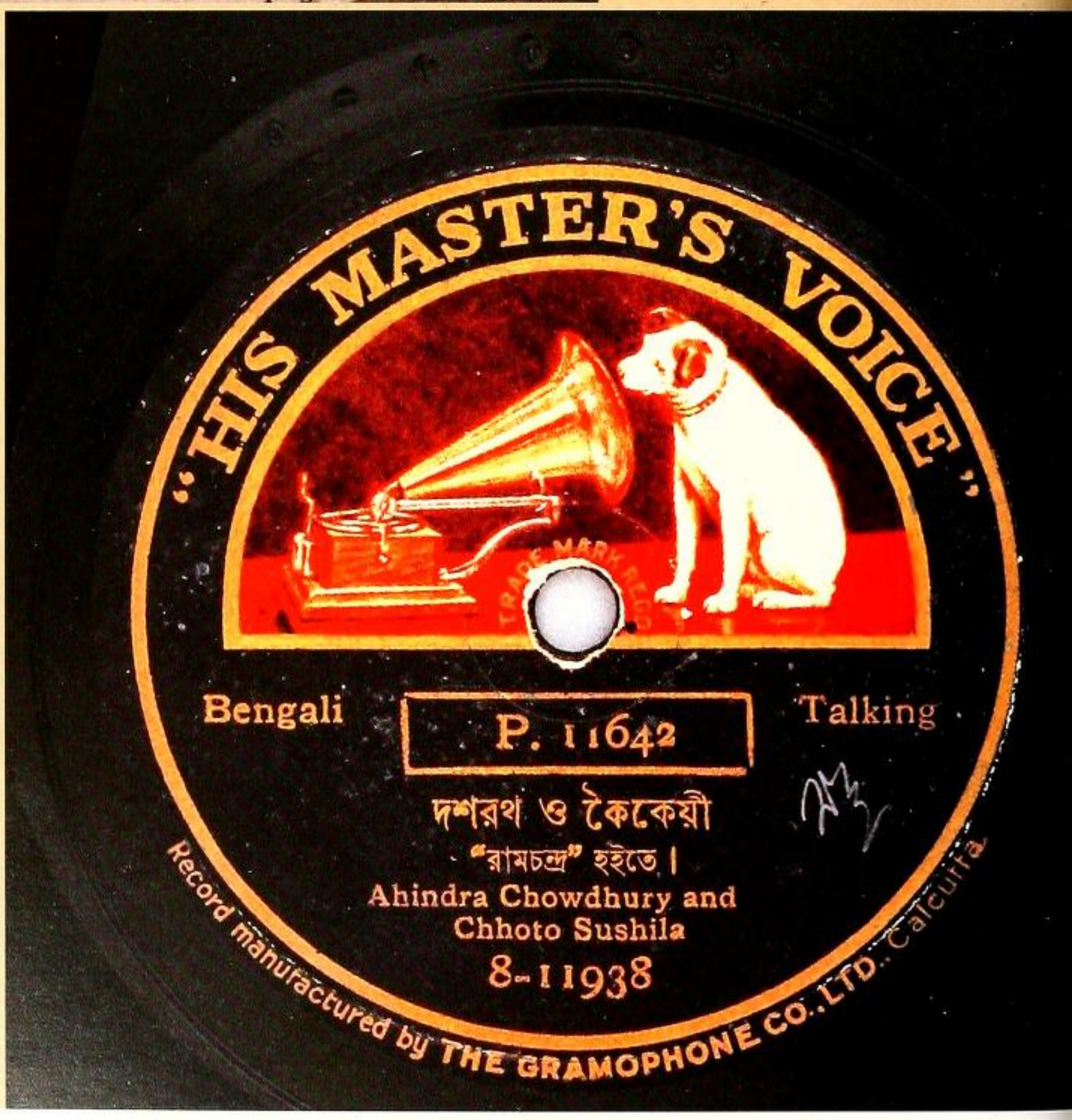
Ascharyamoyee Dasi:
His Master's Voice

Michael Madusudan Dutt (1824-73); Dinabandhu Mitra (1830-73); Monmohan Basu (1831-1912); Bihari Lal Chattopadhyay (1840-1901); Raj Krishan Roy (1849-1894); Jyotirindranath Tagore (1849-1925); Atul Krishna Mitra (1857-1912); Girish Chandra Ghosh (1844-1912); Amrit Lal Basu (1853-1929); Amrendra Nath Dutt (1876-1916); Kshirode Prasad Vidyavinaode (1863-1927); Dwijendra Lal Roy (1831-1913), Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894) and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) have rendered great service to the cause of Bengali theatre.

This period was also blessed with a number of famous artists. These artists were Miss Bindoobala Dassi, Miss Nogendrabala Dassi, Miss Bedana Dassi, Miss Charubala, Miss Charusheela, Miss Kohinoorbala, Miss Rani, Miss Chotta Rani, Miss Bhubeneshwari, Miss Shossilla, Miss Subhashini, Miss Basantkumari, Miss Ascharyomojee Dassi, Miss Krishan bhamini, Miss Niroda Sundri Dassi, Miss Manoda Sundari Dassi, Miss Ranisundari Dassi, Miss Pachumoni Dassi, Miss Kumudini, Miss Dalimmoni Dassi, Miss Pannarani, Miss Panchuharimati Dassi, Miss Prafulla Kumari, Miss Chotto Susheela, Shri Kunja Lal Chakroborthy, Master Madan Mohan Chattarjee, Shri Panna Lal Sircar and Shri Tinkari Chakraborty.

Shri Pannalal Sircar worked for Classic Theatres and was extensively recorded

Bedana Dassi:
Gramophone Concert
Record




Ahindra Chowdhury
and Chhoto Sushila:
His Master's Voice

during the first recording tour undertaken by Fredrick William Gaisberg during 1902. Some of his records under record numbers 13210 from the drama 'Bilwamangal', 13213 from the drama 'Prafulla', and GC-13088 from the drama 'Jana' preserve his voice for posterity.

So strong was the hold of the old popular plays on the public mind that they became classics in their own right. The several private and public theatres that continued to flourish in Bengal till the 1920's had to stage these plays time and again. Though theatres did introduce new plays from time to time as the corps of Bengali playwrites was busy introducing new themes and styles, the old favorites always were in great demand. They had rich music, great songs, dances, dialogues, spectacle- in short, everything the Indian mind considered mood elevating or manoranjak. Those who could not watch a theatre performance first-hand (women, and men

Pauna Lal Sircar, Calcutta: Gramophone Record

from the lower middle-class downwards) craved for any part of it that could be had outside a public theatre. The sound recording companies identified this existing demand and stepped in with recordings of dialogues, songs and theme music from popular plays to fill the gap. Significantly, the very first artists Frederic William Gaisberg chose to record in India in 1902-1903 (Miss Soshi Mukhi, Miss Fanibala) had a theatre background.

In order to shortlist artists for recording, Gaisberg and his team sought the help of the great actor, manager and theatre-owner Amarendra Nath Dutta of The Classic Theatre, and Jamshedji Framji Madan (1857-1923), great entrepreneur and controller of the famous Corinthian Theatre. Gaisberg even approached the Superintendent of Calcutta Police, under whose guidance he went to Harrison Road, Calcutta and more specifically to

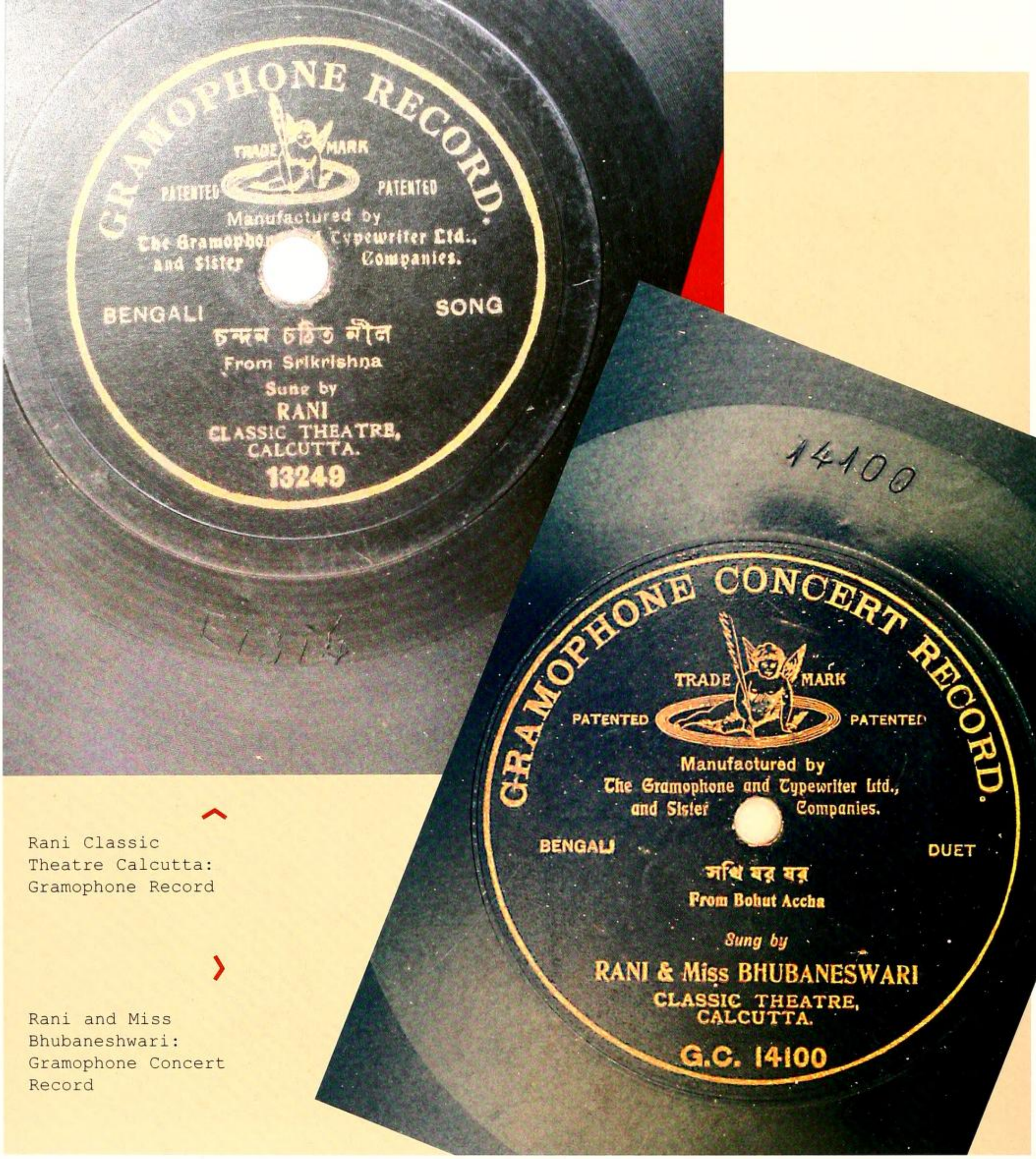
Babu Pauna Lal Sircar, Calcutta: Gramophone Concert Record

The Classic Theatre.

On November 8, F.W. Gaisberg first recorded the voice of a local Englishman Walter Stanley Burke to test the readiness of recording equipments. The selection of W.S. Burke was not accidental, he was an amateur actor best known for his comic role of "Bengali Baboo". Burke came to India in 1877 from London to join The Eastern Bengal Railways' but he left his job and became a journalist. A sports enthusiast, Burke was into cycling, shooting, fishing, rowing and was popular within the sports fraternity of Calcutta. He also published a sports-paper "The Indian Field", and was founder/associate of a number of sports bodies of Calcutta.

During his first recording tour of 1902-03 Gaisberg recorded Soshi Mukhi and

Babu Pauna Lal Sircar, Calcutta: Gramophone Concert Record




Rani Classic Theatre Calcutta: Gramophone Record

Rani and Miss Bhubaneshwari: Gramophone Concert Record

Fanibala (songs from the play 'Dol Lila'); Miss Bhubaneshwari (songs from the play 'Sonar Swapan'); Chotta Rani (songs from the play 'Nand Bidya' and 'Aladin'); Miss Rani (songs from the plays 'Hariraj', 'Bohut Accha' and 'Shri Krishna'). He also recorded some Dadras and Gazals by Miss Harimati. Stephen Carl Porter recorded Miss Rani for the Nicole label (record numbers C-124 and C-242) in 1904-05.

"Out of the five hundred and fifty odd recordings taken by Fred Gaisberg during the first recording tour of November and December 1902, and apart from a few classical vocalists and a couple of novelty items recorded towards the end of the tour, all other recordings taken were either by the singers, dancers and musicians associated with The Classic Theatre who provided most of the Bengali language recordings, or by the artists of the

Miss Rani

Miss Kumudini Adoron Theatre: Gramophone Record

Corinthian Theatre who provided the Hindustani and Gujrati language recordings." (Page 18-19, The Gramophone Company's First Indian Recordings 1899-1908 By Michael S. Kinnear, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.)

Some other popular actresses like Miss Bindoobala and Miss Kumudini were recorded by William Sinkler Darby during the second recording tour in 1904-05. Their 7" records under the Gramophone Record label (record numbers 13637 and 13640, 13642) highlight their association with Adoran Theatre. Their being released under the 10"sized Gramophone Concert Records (record numbers G.C-13886, G.C-13846, G.C-13845 by Miss Bindoobala; and G.C-13847 and G.C-13848 by Miss Kumudini) is proof of their

Miss Bindoo Bala Adoron Theatre: Gramophone Concert Record

wide appeal. George Walter Dillnutt too recorded Miss Kumudini during The Sealdah recording session of 1909; consequently, eight records of her Oriya songs were released in 10"sized Gramophone Concert Record (record numbers G.C-8-13263 to G.C-8-13267, G.C-8-13276, G.C-8-13277 and G.C-8-13357)

Actor-singer Subhashini worked for the Minerva and Star theatres. Her musical talent and melodious voice earned her the sobriquet 'Kinnarkanthi' or fairy-voiced. She acted in a number of popular plays including 'Atmadarshan', 'Kinnari' and 'Nartaki'. She was recorded at Calcutta during the first recording session by Frederick William Gaisberg in 1902-03. Her 7"sized Gramophone Records (record numbers 13152 of songs from the play

'Inder Sabha'; 13191 and 13202 of songs from the play 'Tilusmati Muhar'; 13201 of songs from the play 'Dil Farosh' and 13212 of songs from the play 'Khufiya Police') and 10"sized Gramophone Concert Records (record number G.C-13074 of songs from the Hindustani play ' Bhul Bhulaiya' and record number G.C-13090 of songs from the Bangla play 'Panika Salta') are samplers of this accomplished singer's songs from Bengali and Parsee theatres.

Another actress Miss Charubala (Sr.) worked for the Great National, Kohinoor and Star theatres (Charubala Junior appeared on the Bengali theatre scene in late 1930s). She acted in plays like 'Chandradhwaj', 'Jibane Marane' and 'Kshatrabeer' and was recorded by Beka Grand label (Beka 20277). Miss Kohinoorbala worked for the Great National and Star theatres, she left her mark as Rosie in 'Asha Mori' and as Umasundari in 'Prafulla'. First recorded during the Calcutta recording session of 1910 her records under the low-cost Zonophone label (record number X3-103081, X3-03082 and X3-103083) are testimonies of her popularity.

Miss Panchumani Dassi was another popular singer-actor who was recorded at Calcutta by George Walter Dillnutt during September-October 1909. Her records (record numbers G.C-8-13338 to G.C-8-13341 and Zonophone X-3-103078) were released both in Zonophone as well as Gramophone Concert labels.

Miss Subhashini: His Master's Voice

Subhashini

Miss Subhashini: His Master's Voice

Accomplished singer Krishnabhamini was the teacher of renewed Tappa singer Kalipada Pathak. She started her theatre career with The Star Theatre. Some of her famous roles were Chhaya ('Ayyodhar Begam'); Padmabati ('Karnarjun') and Rani ('Iraner Rani'). She was recorded extensively by The Gramophone Company Ltd. during its various recording sessions conducted by Frederic

1,2 Miss Charoo Bala: Beka Grand Record
3,4 Miss Kohinoor Bala: Zonophone Record

William Gaisberg and George Walter Dillnutt. More than fifty recordings were made and released in 10"sized records. Almost all the songs were in Bangla and were rendered in Rag Multani (X-3-103075); Rag Bhairavee (G.C-4-13284); Rag Kedar (GC-4-13102); Rag Desh (G.C-8-13123); Rag Behag (G.C-8-13132); Rag Sarang (G.C-8-13134); Rag Iman Bhupali (G.C-8-13280); Rag Asawari (G.C-8-13282); Rag Malhar (G.C-8-13306); Rag Todi (G.C-8-13311); Rag Bageshri (G.C-9-13170) and Rag Ramkali (G.C-9-13172).

Bedana Dassi and Manadasundari Dassi, another very popular artist duo cut a large number of gramophone discs, which remained in great demand for a very long time. Bedana Dassi was first recorded during the 1904-05 recording session of The Gramophone Typewriter Ltd. Only one 7" record of her song 'Amar Man Bedana' (number 13647/ Khambaj-Dhima Tetala) was released. She

Records by
Panchumani Dassi

Krishnabhamini

Sushila Sundari Dasi Sr

was recorded again during the 1906-07 recording session at Calcutta and eighteen of her songs were released (for e.g. record numbers G.C-3-13029, G.C-3-13036, G.C-13490 and G.C.-3-13502). Her songs 'Bohudur Hate Asech Aami" (G.C-3-13501) and "Pagal Korecho Tumi Aanhike Pran Aamare" (G.C-3-13033) were very popular numbers. The constant demand for Bedana numbers between 1908 and 1910, led The Gramophone Company Ltd. to release about seventy titles of hers. Some of her famous numbers were 'Aaj Tomake Dekhte Elam' (record number G.C.-4-13090/ Bhairobee Khemta), 'Keno Chao Nite Pran Churi Kore' (G.C-8-13326), 'Kanha Jibon Dhon' (G.C-8-13292/Gaur Sarang) and 'Neel Aakashe Kiron Hanshe' (G.C-9-13200/Jangla). Stephen Carl Porter also recorded her for Nicole records during 1904-05. Nicole released her song 'Pagal Koreychey Tomar Aankhitey' (record numbers C-397). She also recorded 'Amar Kancha Pireet' for Beka Grand Records (Beka Grand, white label record number 1587). Later, HMV also released Bengalee songs of another Miss Bedana (record number H.M.V. 19-3804 and 19-13805) who was also known as Bichhua Bai.

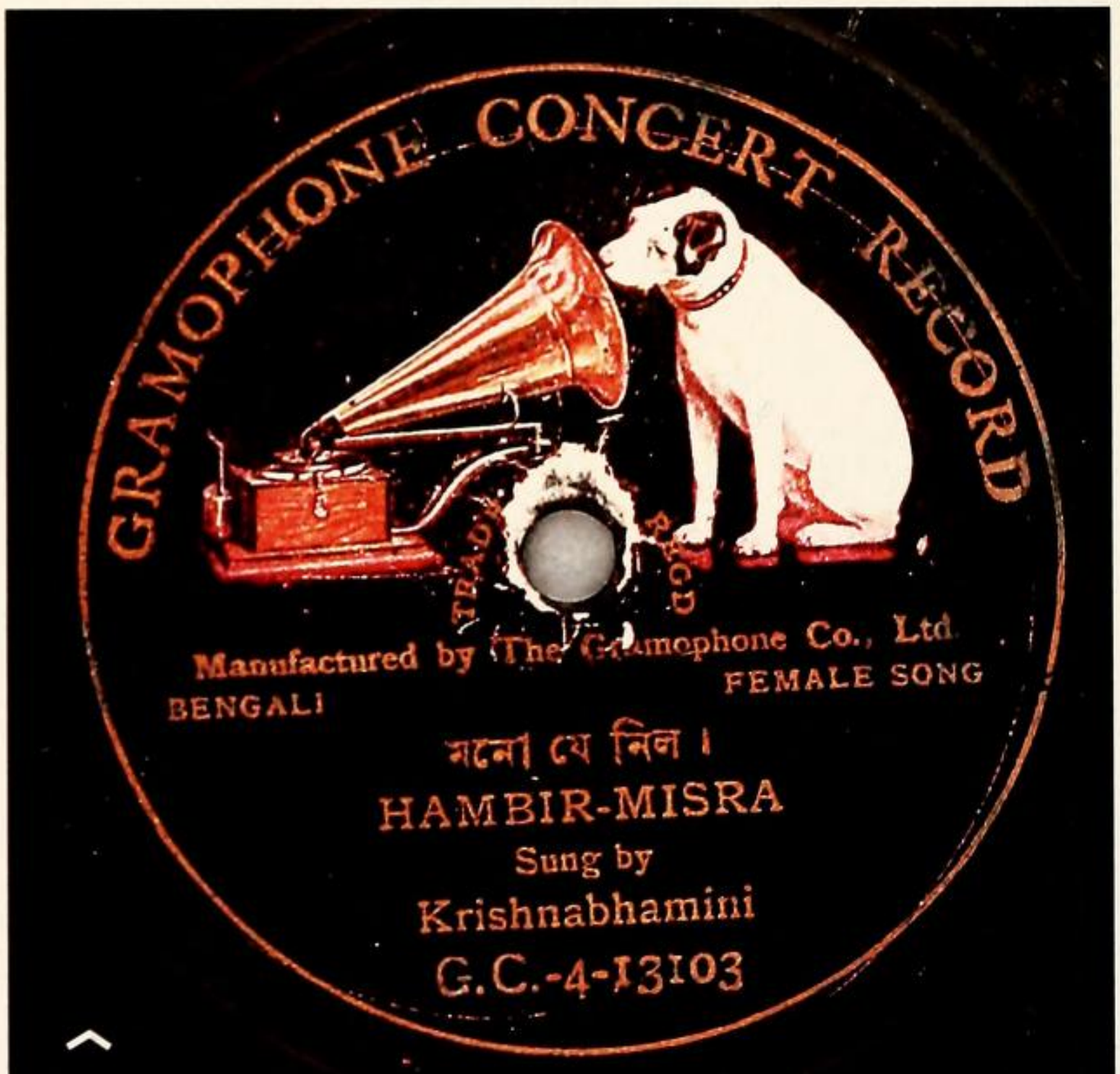
Manadasundari Dassi's song 'Jabe Ke Key Din Aamar' (record number X-3-103016) has the distinction of being a favourite of Swami Vivekanand. Also known as Pratibha Dassi, she worked for the National Theatre and played Parul in 'Torubala' and Molina in 'Molina Bikash'. The Gramophone Company Ltd. recorded Manadasundari Dassi during the recording session of 1910 at Calcutta. Some of her songs were released as Zonophone records (record numbers X-3-103016 to X-3-103021).

Nogendrabala Dassi, Nirodasundari Dassi and Nolinisundari Dassi were a remarkable trio of singer-actors. Nogendrabala debuted as Sushila in Girish Chandra Ghosh's play Haranidhi. She worked for the Bengal, Star and Minerva theatres. Nogendrabala was first recorded by William Conrad Gaisberg during 1906-07 and twelve records were released (record numbers G.C-3-13475 to G.C-3-13479, G.C-3-13514 to G.C-3-13519 and G.C-3-13707). A second recording session in April 1908 at Calcutta for Frederick William Gaisberg resulted in the release of thirteen of her records (record numbers G.C-4-13131 to G.C-4-13136,.G.C-4-12150 to G.C-4-13152, G.C-2-14172 to G.C-2-14174 and Zonophone number X-

3-103073). Some of these records contained songs from popular plays like 'Durgadas', 'Durgeshanandini', 'Chaitanya Leela', 'Noorjahan', 'Parinam', 'Siri Farhad'.

Nirodasundari Dassi, originally a dancegirl, started her long stage career in 1898 with the play 'Nirmala' at the Classic Theatre and remained active on the Bengali stage for over four decades. Some of her memorable roles were Miss Chatterjee ('Chirantani'); Dalani ('Chandrasekhar') and Beerabai ('Alamgir'). Miss Nolinisundari Dassi was recorded during the Sealdah recording session of October-December 1908 by George Walter Dillnutt. Her four records of Rag Purbi (G.C-8-13105), Rag Sarang (G.C-8-13106), Rag Sarang (GC-8-13138) and Rag Jangla (GC-8-13139) preserve her melodious voice and testify her sound classical base.

The story of Bengal Theatres, a great theatrical world, does not end here. The list of its patrons, artists and their contributions cannot be summed up in a few pages. Its great performances have continued and still contribute to the cause of theatre in modern times. However while recalling its history, we must pay respect to those great sound recordists, recording companies and artists who took lots of pains and recorded some of these masterpieces of art, which in the form of record discs, still preserve them for posterity. A selective photo-discography of Bengal theatres is a humble tribute to these great departed souls.




1. Records by Nogendra Bala Dassi, Minerva Theatre
2. Records by Krishna Bhamini

Walter Benjamin

PATHE GRAMOPHONE WALKMAN, 1910

# 12 WALTER BENJAMIN AND RECORDED MUSIC

When Edison's phonograph was invented in 1877, "Samachar Chandrika" was one of the first periodicals to report (in its issue dated 9th January 1878) the existence of a marvelous sound recording and talking machine: "by the help of this machine, words can be stored in its bottle and whenever one prefers to hear them, he can open the cork and hear the words. Even after hundred or even thousand years, by reopening the cork one could hear the same words". It is clear that more than the knowledge of technology and science, the reporter of this news item was relying on descriptions of wondrous gadgets found in folklore. The record of a phonograph used to be of cylindrical shape and as this shape of the record resembled a bottle, it led the reporter to believe that the music had been bottled in the cylindrical record. Recorded music thus was perceived as bottled or canned music because the machine had the capability to record a voice and to reproduce it as and when the record was played.

Whatever the physical shapes of records, whether cylindrical or disc-like, one fact is undisputed: this invention opened opportunities for recording, reproducing and storage of renderings of our great musicians which would otherwise have been lost. The musical tradition of the world by then had already suffered an irreparable loss. In the Indian context alone, as P.B. Joshi in his article "the Future of Hindustani Music" lamented: "What havoc time is wreaking in the field of our musical art can be estimated from the fact that in 1842AD the author of the "Sangeet Kalpdrum" could name about 400 current Ragas and gave us a hundred thousand readymade songs then sung. Today the most that a musician can give us is 200 Ragas and about a thousand songs! That over 200 works of art and ninety thousand pieces of poetry (and each Indian melody is a work of art and each old song, a sublime piece of poetry) should have been lost to India within 70 years is matter of extreme regret and if the rest are to be saved the death through neglect it is time to bestir; another ten years and it will be too late."

Joshi identified three ways in which music can be learnt, continued and

conserved for posterity: the first, by learning from living gurus; the second, through the notation system; and the third by listening to the recordings of great masters. However, he firmly believed that though the notation system helped conserve the great musical heritage of this country to some extent, it still remained only an instrument which can teach drawing but not painting. He says: "notation will give us scales and not the nice shades. For that we must make use of the living artists. And these people could only become available to the students if they have a common meeting ground say a Central Academy at a place like Delhi or Lucknow. Many of the states may be willing to lend us the services of their musicians. Others will perhaps be only too willing to send them away altogether. It is from these artists that our students well-versed in theory and the use of scales should get assistance. Probably an enterprising Gramophone Co. may be induced to record the masterpieces of our Ustads. An academy of this nature will not cost more than three or four thousand rupees a month, not a big sum when we keep in view the fact that at times we pay millions for a single work of art. Still, the attempt of the 2nd All India Music Conference Committee to find that money seems to have failed. Will any of our millionaires come forward with a donation that will help us to infuse life into our musical art which has, in very high quarters, been declared to be 'the greatest heritage of the east'?"

By 1924, when this article was written, the recording industry in India was well established but a casual glance at the list of recorded artists reveals that recordings of many great artists do not figure therein. This obviously dealt a lethal blow to the cause of music, because many great practitioners of Indian music remained unrecorded despite the existence of contemporary recording facilities. It was only logical that Joshi conferred on the recorded rendering a higher position than the notated music of departed gurus.

However, this raises two questions: can a recorded rendering be a true and authentic representative of an artist's musical caliber; and, can it conserve the music of these great artists without the loss of any of its elements?

"In the 1930s, Walter Benjamin outlined

Even before Walter Benjamin cautioned about the "loss of aura" as a result of mechanical reproduction, poet-essayist Paul Valery was warning about the irreversible changes technology was heralding in our perception of art:

"....the amazing growth of our techniques, the adaptability and precision they have attained, the ideas and habits they are creating, make it a certainty that profound changes are impending in the ancient art of the Beautiful.

In all the arts there is a physical component which can no longer be considered or treated as it used to be, which cannot remain unaffected by our modern knowledge and power. For the last twenty years neither matter nor space nor time has been what it was from time immemorial. We must expect great innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts, thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bringing about an amazing change in our very notion of art."

[Pieces sur L'Art, 1931/ Le Conquete de l'ubiquite.]

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the impact of technology on art in his prescient article "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Benjamin was concerned with the authenticity of a work of art, its "aura" as a unique "presence in space and time." With mechanical reproduction, such a unique presence was lost or weakened as a "historical testimony," and consequently the work of art lost its "authority." This loss of authority led in turn to a "tremendous shattering of tradition"[1]

According to Benjamin, it is the "Aura" which gives the piece of an art, its authenticity and which remains present in the space and time of the original art piece, but gets weakened as a consequence of mechanical reproduction of the art piece. In the case of a piece of recorded music, it implies that the live rendering of an artist, if recorded for mechanical reproduction in the form of records can lead to weakening or loss of its authority and authenticity because its 'aura' does not get transferred in such mechanically reproduced pieces of art, i.e. records.

To examine the above assertion of Benjamin, let us analyze what can be an "aura" in "time and space" in the context of Indian classical music and if the live rendering is recorded and transformed in the form of a mechanically reproduced record, does this "aura" also gets transferred there into, so as the authority of the piece of music is not lost?

When a musical piece is rendered, the sum total of inputs infused in the rendering in terms of the physical, psychological, metaphysical and ecological elements constitute its 'aura' in the prevailing time and space. Apart from these elements, the performer and the listener are the principal constituents of this 'aura'. Unless both, the performer and the listener participate to their fullest, the 'aura' of music can not be created, nor can it be experienced. In fact, a true musical rendition creates an aura in time and space and within this 'aura' also houses its listeners and maintains a symbiotic relation with them. If this divine spirit or rasa is imbibed by the listener in its true spirit i.e. rasanubhuti, the cycle of symbiotic relation between the performer and the listener is complete.

Coming to the elements which constitute the 'aura' of music, music "itself was never discovered out of the call of the cuckoo or the nightingale or from the breeze passing through jungles of bamboos. The human voice itself is the origin of music. Man is himself mentally as well as physically a well-strung and well-tuned musical instrument and is keenly sensitive and responsive to all vibrations within and without. Our ancient musicologists referred to the origin of music as "Samvedadidam Geetam Sanjagrah Pitamaha". God Brahma created music out of the Sama Veda. Although we have no information as to how and from what part of the Sama Veda, music was produced by Brahma, the above quotation is suggestive enough. Music everywhere must have had its origin in the religious chants. The Sama Veda, the Greek modes, the church hymns were the beginning of music. Overawed by the unfathomable powers; natural phenomenon such as the stars, the lightning, the thundering clouds, the high mountains and the deep seas, man in his early existence must have come down on his knees to worship the elements, defying them, giving them a human form and a name and invoked and propitiated them repeating their names with long vowels and regular beats so that they might look kindly upon him, forgive his faults and protect him from evil influences and destructions. These praises dedicated to Indra, Varuna, Soorya, Agni, etc. here in India; to Jupiter, Athena, Minerva in Greece and to Jesus Christ in Rome were the origin of music. Historically we are absolutely in the dark as to what form music developed into in this land till a complete scale of the seven notes came into being.... As musical sound in human beings, the breath when energized gives rise to a musical sound which is called a "Nada" which is also a combination of 'Nakar", meaning life breath and

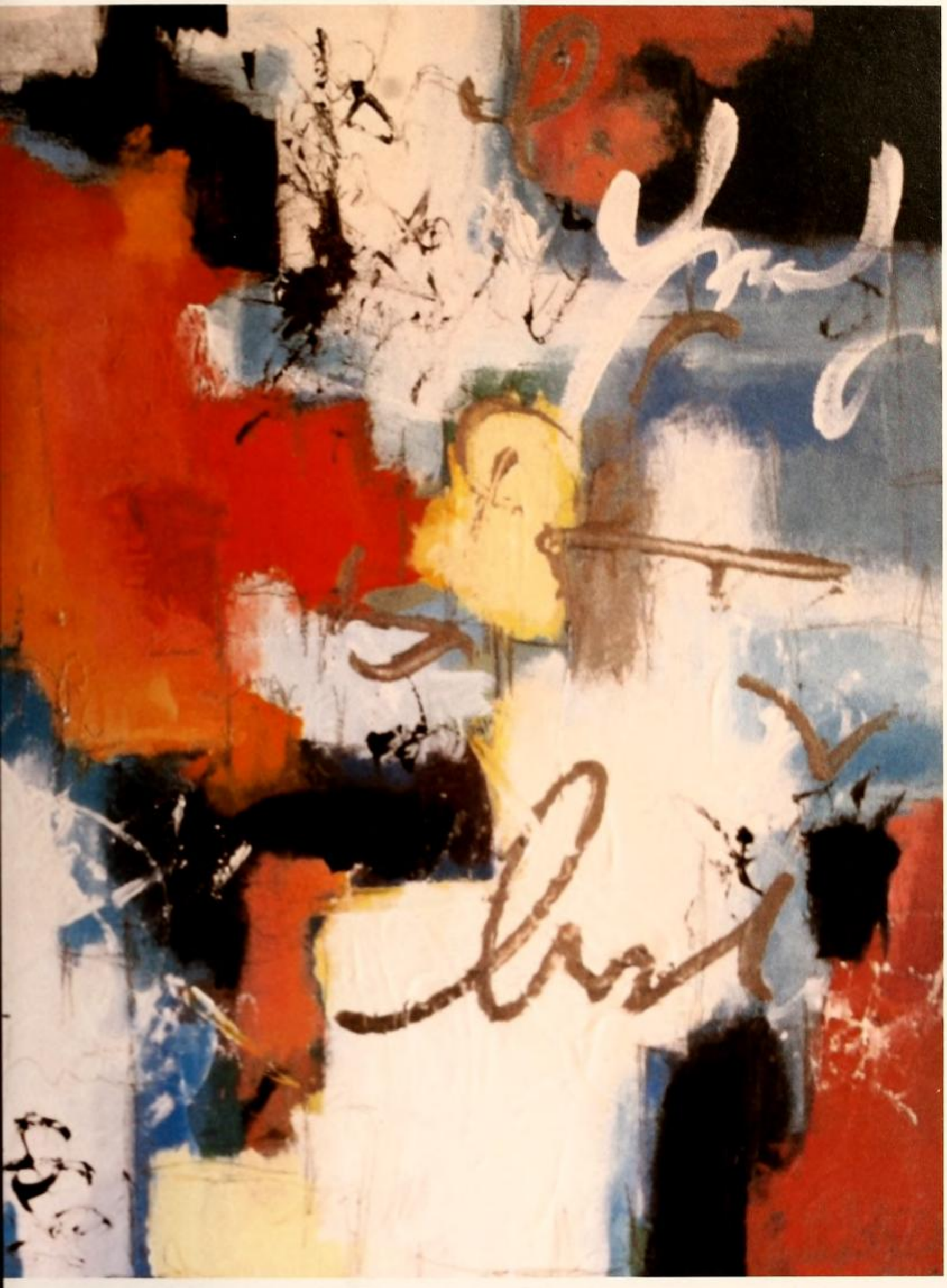
"Dakar", the fire or energy in the body which in India at least is considered to be the prime source, the origin of music .... The soul wishing to express itself prompts the mind or the will, the mind on its part awakens the heat or energy in the body which again in its turn prompts the breath dwelling in the "Bramhagranthi". This breath thus prompted rises-up higher and higher, step by step and comes out through the chest, the throat, as a musical tone. Thus human voice is the prime source of all music." [2]

Two finger-lengths above the base and two finger-breadth below the genitals, in the space of one finger-breadth, is the centre of the body, shining like molten gold. There, at a distance of nine fingers from that centre, is located a slender flame of fire and it is there that the life-source of the body is found, four fingers in elevation as well as in extension. This, according to Sangeetratnakar is the 'Bramhagranthi'.

Ratanjankar elaborates further:

"music is an impression on the mind received through the sense of hearing. The impression must be agreeable, attractive, pleasing and entertaining. In general, therefore, everything that is heard and is agreeable to the sense of hearing and to the mind should be music... Music, in its technical sense, however, is a composition of tones. A tone is a steady sound following certain physical laws, and pleasing in its effect on the sense of hearing. When a body of air is set in regular and very quick vibrations, it produces a tone. The rate of vibrations is known as "frequency". The vibrations of the air must be regular. If they are not, they will produce a jarring sound or noise. They must, again, be quick enough to be perceptible to the sense of hearing. Normally, 120 regular vibrations per second would be the lowest rate of frequency capable of producing a tone cognizable by the sense of hearing for the purpose of music. The material, the

flesh and blood, so to say, of music is tone, which is a natural phenomenon. It is common to all music-Indian, Western, Persian, Arabic, Chinese or African. The frequency, the strength (degree of loudness or softness) and quality ("timbre", as it is called), of a tone are properties which also come under the physical science of music... Thus a composition of tones in an order of succession is the texture of a



raga. The swaras are its flesh and blood, while the varnas give it the shape, the bodily from. And yet a composition of tones in an order of succession may not be a raga because the last and most important condition, that a musical effect or musical value, is not observed... The raga, in the case of Indian music, assumes different expression when it is presented by different artistes, depending upon this is so only in the case of true artistes. Every one who sings a raga is not necessarily an artist. He may be presenting a raga in its correct from, and yet the raga may fall completely flat on the ears of the listeners. Such a man is no musician. There are certain inherent qualities, which are essential for a true musician. "Impression" the taking in of music and "expression" (the giving out of music) are the two chief venues.

The ear receives the impression, and the voice or the fingers on an instrument produce the expression. A keen ear for music is the first and inevitable quality that goes to make a musician. The capacity to appreciate the minutest degrees of pitch (intensity) is the mark of an ear for music. But this capacity alone is not all that goes to make an ear for music. The ear must also be highly trained in appreciating the effect of compositions of tones. It must be able to pick out passages which have a particular musical value and retain them. "Expression" on the other hand means the capacity to reproduce music received through the ear and retained in the memory as well as the ability to produce original ideas, original passages of music either by the voice or by the fingers on an instrument."[3]

In his treatise on music 'Sangeetratnakara', Sarngadeva has acknowledged that for its manifestation music depends on the composers, the performers, the medium of expression and their talent. He has defined a master composer (the best vaggeyakara) as "one who is (possessed) of these excellences: a thorough knowledge of grammar, proficiency in lexicography, knowledge of prosody (lit. Differentiating among the various meters), proficiency in the use of (different) figures of speech, comprehension of aesthetic delight (rasa) as related to (different) emotive states of being (bhava), intelligent familiarity with local custom, knowledge of many languages, proficiency in the scientific theories of fine arts, expert knowledge of the three musical arts, a lovely tone-quality, good knowledge of laya (tempo), tala (musical time) and kala, discrimination of different intonations, a versatile genius, a beautiful musical rendering acquaintance with regional (desi) ragas, cleverness in conversation for victory in debates, freedom from like and dislike, aesthetic sensitivity, a sense of propriety in expression and new melodic forms, knowledge of another's mind, maturity in the understanding of different (varieties of) prabandhas, the ability to compose songs at short notice, the expert knowledge of composing different verbal structures for particular melodic forms, maturity in producing gamakas (shakes and graces) pervading the three registers, proficiency in (the presentation of) different (forms of) alapa and attention."[4] He has also identi-

Benjamin's epoch making essay The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction locates a shift in the status of traditional art as technical means of reproduction such as photography and film begin to dominate the imagination of a mass public. He defines the characteristic of manual production of the traditional artwork as a historical process unique to the original object, manifest in the object as its 'aura'; and insists the technical reproductions bear only an image-like similarity to the original, they lack the 'aura' and so any relation to the actual historical dimension of it:

fied other categories of the composer- the average or bad or unworthy composer are also defined.

Sarangadeva also defined the best singer: "…..who has an attractive voice of good tone quality, who is an adept in initiating and finishing (a raga); who is well versed in (singing) the ragas, ragangas, kriyangas and upangas, an expert in singing prabandhas and knows the essentials of the different forms of alapti; who commands a natural access to the gamakas (shakes and graces) arising from all the (three) registers, and a self-controlled voice; who is aware of musical time (tala), and is attentive and indefatigable, who knows suddha and chayalaga (compositions), who is an expert in all the specific intonations (kaku), who commands the movement of different sthayas; who is free of all blemishes, given to regular exercise, mindful of laya (tempo), versatile and retentive, who has the capacity to hold his breath while singing with great passion and to arrest the attention of the audience, and who excels in the expositions of raga and belongs to a good tradition."[5]

He has also defined in detail the average, the bad and other types of singers like the educator (siksakara), the imitator (anukara), the aesthete (rasika), the entertainer (ranjaka) and the inspirer of emotion (bhavaka), songstresses, censured singers, blemishes of singing, kinds of voice, blemishes of voice and other categories and sub-categories of inputs which constitute Indian classical music.

Therefore, Sarangadeva's theory, when applied to our times, leads one to the conclusion that the physical input in a musical rendition is directly linked with the musical ability of the artist selected for recording as well as the quality of machine which records it.

"However, Indian music is not just a raag. Although a raag is the basic element of composition, it is not the composition itself. The whole ethos of the music spills out beyond the actual mechanics of the raag, beyond the development through a series of movements, beyond the compass of the musician as performer, into the wider realm of an activated audience, responding, enlarging the impact, enhanc-

"....that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art. This is a symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition".

Benjamin also pointed out the potential threat to the autonomy of art:

"When the age of mechanical reproduction separated art from its basis in cult, the semblance of its autonomy disappeared forever".

ing the impetus towards a spiritual absorption one into the other, until all the component parts merge into an experience beyond the purely musical."[6]

Thus once a musical value is inculcated in a musical piece by rendition, a 'rasa' is created and thence commences the psychological chapter of the 'aura'. This triggers its experience in both, the performer and the listener. The experience of music thus becomes a psycho-somatic phenomenon. This further leads to a stage of rasanubhuti which is akin to a spiritual experience-a stage of divinity. "Rasa, according to Indian philosophers, is of the divine essence. Its experience therefore is elevated next to that of Brahmananda, or self-realisation. It was called Brahmanandasahodara, or akin to self-realisation... Quoting from Visvanatha's Sahityadarpana, Thakur Jaideva Singh discussed four important aspects of rasanubhuti (artistic experience): akhandasvaprakasananda cinmayah; vedyantarasparsasunyah; brahmasvadasahodarah; and lokottaracamatkarapranah... The first phrase can be split up into four parts, akhanda, svaprakasa, ananda and cinmaya. Akhanda, as explained by Thakur, is a total, integrated and indivisible experience, not an arithmetical sum of the various elements of experience. In the words of modern psychology, it is a gestalt. Svaprakasa means self-luminous. It shines by its own light. It does not require any extraneous agency. Ananda is sheer ecstasy, and cinmaya is spiritual experience. Vedyantarasparsasunyah is an intuitive experience without any meditation. Hence it is also called an immediate experience. There is only a pervasive consciousness of spiritual ecstasy which swallows up the distinction of the knower and known. Brahmasvadasahodarah refers to that which is akin to the realization of Brahman, or self...Such an experience is obviously not possible in our normal life, where the separation of the identities of the knower and the known are inevitable. It is only at the metaphysical and spiritual level that the fusion of the knower and the known is possible. This fusion can take place in the experience of rasa, which has consequently been linked to Brahmananda, or the beatitude of the realisation of the Self. It is compared to Brahmananda also because the realization of ecstasy comes after the transcendence of the limitation of egocentric impulses, when all consciousness of duality has been obliterated... Lokottaracamatkarapranah. It is lokottara, or transcendental, super-mundane; camatkara means in this context 'flash of delightful wonder'. In other words, aesthetic experience is transcendental and above mundane experience. Visvanatha says that this can be enjoyed only "as one's being, as an intrinsic, indivisible aspect of one's self' (svakaravadaminnatvena)". He says that this can be relished only by those who are deeply sensitive to beauty. Not all are capable of this experience... The expression of rasa is possible only when the artiste dissolves his personality in the music; when the fissiparous ego dies, the music becomes universal; but this is not a state that can be achieved through outward practice and perfection. It is a state of inward realization and comes without effort; paradoxically enough, it vanishes the moment the effort becomes conscious. In this sense it is very like spiritual experience."[7]

A relation among physical, psychological, spiritual and ecological, elements of music which contribute to the creation of its 'aura' both in and around the renderer and the listener is detailed in Sangeetratnakara. Ten psycho-physical centres or cakras have been recognised as existent in the astro-physical body of human beings. However, yogic schools like Kundalini-Yoga, Mantra-Yoga and Raja-Yoga mention six such psychophysical centres. "These chakras function as the centres of consciousness at various planes and concentration and control of one or many of these centres bestows enormous psychic and occult powers. Situated in between the anus and the genitals is the basic psychic centre called the 'foundational cycle' (Adhara-cakra), four-petalled lotus as it

were. The petals are invested with the fruits of supreme bliss, spontaneous happiness, heroic joy and the divine unity respectively. In the centre of the foundational cycle lies the creative power of the Supreme Being called Kundalini, which in the event of being unfolded bestows immortality. This centre is also called Muladhara (literally, the basic support, the foundation) cakra. Kinetic energy is said to be asleep here in static mood and it can be aroused through meditation. The four-petalled lotus is a symbolic expression used as an aid to meditation on the centre, when the slumbering energy is awakened, it rushes through the spinal cord to the next higher centre at a terrific speed, and the aspirant finds himself uplifted to a different plane of consciousness with a different perception and value judgement. The creative power of the Supreme Being, of Brahman, the kinetic energy, the sakti of Siva and the Maya of Brahman, the power of creating appearances, is stationed at the root of the spinal column. Ordinarily this energy lies curved into a coil (i.e., three rounds and a half) and that is why it is called Kundalini. But by concentration and meditation its coils are unfolded and in that event it rushes up the spinal cord to the upper cerebrum and reaches the mystic cerebral aperture (brahmarandhra) and this results in enlightenment, an experience of timeless being which is immortality.

Situated at the root of genitals is the six-

However, before jumping to conclusions, one must remember two facts- one, Benjamin limited his criticism to cinema and photography; and two, he went on to add:

".... technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself. Above all, it enables the original to meet the beholder halfway, be it in the form of a photograph or a phonograph record. The cathedral leaves its locale to be received in the studio of a lover of art; the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, resounds in the drawing room".

petalled lotus, the psychophysical center called 'self-abiding cycle (svadhisthana-cakra). The consequent fruits of (concentration on) the eastern and the other petals are respectively said to be courtesy, freedom from pride- stupor- disrespect- and distrust. This is the seat of passion.

The ten-petalled lotus, the psychophysical centre called the 'navel cycle' (manipuraka cakra) is located around the navel. The results flowing out of (meditation on) the eastern and other petals respectively are: dreamless sleep, craving, jealousy, fault-finding nature, bashfulness, fear, hatred, stupidity, impropriety and dejection. This centre is the seat of a particular prana called bhanu. Manipura or manipuraka-cakra is also called nabhi-padma, i.e., and the navel lotus as it is located around the region of the root of the navel. That is why it has conveniently been named as the 'navel cycle'. The name manipura is explained in a round-about way. It is said in the Gautamiya Tantra that owing to the presence of the fiery tejas (brilliance) this centre is lustrous as a gem (mani) and so it is called manipura.

In the heart is located the psycho-physical centre called the 'cycle of unmanifest (anahata-cakra), with twelve petals which is considered to be the place worshipping lord Siva in the form of Om. The consequences meeting the mind concentrated upon eastern and other petals respectively are freedom from fickleness, clear thinking, repentance, hope, light, worry, desire forwarding off evil, equanimity, vanity, mental instability discernment and will. The anahata-cakra is the psycho-physical centre where in manifests 'Sabda-brahman' a concept which can best be conveyed in English by the expression 'the absolute manifested as the inarticulate word'. This centre is said to be the seat of the embodied consciousness, i.e., the Jivatman. Anahata nada or unmanifest sound is associated with this centre which is considered to be the pulse of life. It is said in the Satcakranirupana that the one who meditates on this centre becomes a master of speech and gains the power to create and to destroy. This lotus is the seat

Both Valery and Benjamin made their insightful observations in the third decade of the twentieth century when the commodification of the artist was just beginning to be noticed. Though used for centuries in the area of commerce and trade, techniques of mass production had never been used in the area of 'the Arts' so far. With the advent of photography and sound recording machines, the areas of painting and music were perceived as being invaded.

Here, Bemjamin took a radical stand:

".....for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility. From a photographic negative, for example, one can make any number of prints; to ask for the "authentic" print makes no sense".

of Siva and the residence of hamsa (the Atman).

The psycho-physical centre with sixteen petals, called the visuddhi cakra (cycle of purity) is situated in the throat-larynx and is know as the abode of Bharati, the goddess of learning. Contemplation on the eastern and other petals offers the following results respectively the seven tones sadja etc. and poison. This centre is situated at the base of the throat. Visuddhi-cakra is so called because the ego-soul having perceived the spirit soul, i.e., the jivatman, the embodied consciousness having discovered the atman, the boundless being within, in the cycle of unmanifest the anahat cakra gets purified. Thus it is endowed with the power to perceive the three phases of time viz. the past, present and the future. This centre is considered to be the gateway to the final emancipation from all limitations of consciousness.

The psycho-physical centre called lalana with twelve petals is situated in the back of the neck. The consequences emerging out of (concentration upon) the eastern and the other petals respectively are-arrogance, haughtiness, affection, sorrow, agony, greed, disenchantment, emotional excitement, the basic urge for living, devotion, satisfaction and cleverness. The psycho-physical centre called the 'cycle of supreme command' (ajna cakra), having three petals is located in-between the two eyebrows. The results of (contemplating upon) the various petals respectively are the manifestations of three gunas-satva, rajas and tamas. Ajna cakra is so called because it is said that the ajna of the guru, the supreme preceptor is obtained directly by contemplating in the region of this centre. Even higher than that is situated the psychophysical centre called the 'cycle of the mind' (manas-cakra), having six petals. The consequence attendant upon the eastern and other petals respectively are dreams and the palatal enjoyment, olfactory sensation and the perception of form touch and sound. Over and above that is located the psychophysical centre called the 'cycle of the moon' (soma-cakra) with sixteen petals enshrining the

sixteen phases (of the moon). The consequences, for the individual, attendant upon the eastern and other petals respectively are: grace, forgiveness, straightforwardness, forbearance, detachment, patience, cheerfulness, mirth, horripilation, tears of fixed gaze, stability, profundity, endeavour, purity of heart, generosity and one-pointedness(single-minded concentration). The thousand-petalled lotus (sahsrapatra) which is the source of nectar is located in the cerebral aperture (brahma-randhra). Spilling innumerable streams of ambrosia, it nourishes the body.

The embodied soul established in the (contemplation of) first, eights, eleventh and the twelfth petals of the 'cycle of the unmanifest' (anahata-cakra) attains proficiency in music etc.; while (by concentration on) the fourth, sixth and tenth of the petals one destroys one's capacity for music etc. In the 'cycle of purity' (visuddhi-cakra) contemplation on eight petals from the eight onwards leads to success in musical arts etc. while the sixteenth petal is destructive for this purpose. The tenth and the eleventh petals of the psycho-physical centre called lalana bestow success (in the musical arts), while its first, fourth and fifth petals are known to be detrimental. The embodied soul whose attention is focused in the aperture of the upper cerebrum, being immersed in ambrosia, finds fulfillment and should therefore cultivate the musical arts with great excellence. The embodied soul cannot in any way accomplish anything (worthwhile) in the (field of) musical arts by concentrating on any other petals or psycho-physical centre."[8]

Indian tradition sees music both as a means of enjoyment (bhukti) and as a guide and tool of enlightenment (mukti). He who devotes himself to the pursuit of the manifest i.e. ahata nada, attains worldly enjoyment; whereas when one devotes himself to meditation of the unmanifest i.e. anahata-nada, one achieves salvation. In India, music has been used as a powerful instrument for spiritual and religious awakening. Even though all human endeavour may culminate in the awakening of the unmanifest (anahat nada) within, it can best be achieved through the cultivation of musical arts which cater to the individual, social and spiritual good of humanity.

So far as ecological elements are concerned: "The cycle of the day corresponds to the cycle of life which also has its dawn, its noon, its evening. Each hour represents a different stage of development and is connected to a certain kind of emotion. The cycle of sounds is ruled by the same laws as all other cycles. This is why there are natural relationships between particular hours and the mood evoked by musical modes. Musical modes played at the proper time develop naturally in favourable conditions. Orthodox musicians in India never play a raga at any other than its prescribed time, for at the wrong hour it could never be developed so perfectly, nor could it so greatly move an audience. The Western organist who would play a funeral march at a wedding would, to say the least, appear lacking in taste. In the same way the Indian musician who plays a morning mode in the evening disregarding the surroundings and the mood of his listeners appears utterly lacking in sensibility."[9] And also, "the ragas are also related to specific hours of the day, or night. Each raga is connected with a special mood, or passion, and it is therefore fitting that each melody should also have a special time appropriate to it. Considerable mystic significance is ascribed to the singing of a particular raga in its appropriate hour and some music scholars have recently discovered some physiological basis in the structure of the ragas which seem to offer some rational explanation for assigning particular melodies to particular hours. It is in the Sangita-makaranda that we find, for the first time, a classification of melodies according to their proper hours for singing. In this text, melodies are divided into solar or daytime ragas, and lunar or nocturnal ragas. According to this text (Ch. III, 10-23), the time-table of the melodies is indicated below.

Morning melodies : Gandhara, Deva-gandhara, Dhannakshri, Saindhavi, Narayani,

Gurjari, Bangala, Patamanjari, Lalita, Andola-sri, Saurastreya, Jaya-saksika, Malhara, Sama-vedi, Vasanta, Suddha-Bhairava, Velavali, Bhupala, Soma-raga.

Noon-day melodies : Sankarabharana, Purva, Valahamsa, Desi, Manohari, Saveri, Dombuli Kambhoji, Gopikambhoji, Kaisiki, Madhu-madhavi, Vahuli (two varieties), Mukhari, Mangala-kausika.

In an excellent paper read before the Fourth All-India Music Conference at Lucknow (1925). Pandit V.N. Bhatkhande, expounding the time theory of ragas, pointed out the tow-fold division of the ragas into (I) Purva ragas i.e. ragas fit to be sung between mid-day and mid-night and (ii) Uttara ragas i.e., ragas fit to be sung between mid-night and mid-day… The vadi note determines whether a raga belongs to the Purva, or Uttara group, and an analysis of the note-structure determines during what quarter of the day or night, a particular raga is fit to be sung. Another determinant element is offered by the use of the note sharpened 'ma' (tivra madhyama)…Thus the Bhairava can be changed into the Purvi by the substitution of tivra madhyama for suddha madhyama. So, we find that the melodies of the Bhairava group e.g. Bhairava, Yogiya, Vibasa, Gunakari etc., take the Suddha-madhyama and are sung in the morning; whicle those belonging to the Purvi group, viz. Sri, Gauri, Jeta-Sri, Puriya-Dhanesvari, Malavi, Travani, use the tivra madhyama and are sung in the evening. The sandhi-prakasa ragas, assigned to the period of time which represents the junction (sandhi) of the day and night, use both the madhyamas; one group is sung just before sunrise (e.g. Lalita, Pancama, Bhatiyari, Ramakali etc.) while the other group, (Purvi and its cognates) are sung just after sunset… Since, ragas connote different and differentiated states of feelings, or emotive flavours (rasas), Indian theorists lay great stress on their relative difference in note-structures, corresponding to their relative emotive significances.

According to the Indian theory, there is some inherent quality in some ragas which allocate them to particular season, and attune them to the peculiar atmosphere of nature prevailing during a given season, the melody interpreting the spirit of the season, and the seasonal atmosphere echoing sympathetically to the character and essence of that melody… And it is not until we come to Narad's Sangita-makaranda (a Northern text, probably datable about the 8th-9th centuries) that we come across written authority for this traditional association of melodies with particular seasons and hours of the day. It is quite possible that the assignation of ragas to particular season may be older than the Sangita-makaranda. The seasonal festivities are of great antiquity. The Spring Festival (with its variations for festivals assigned to special flowers e.g. kaumudimahotsava-the great festival of the Kumuda flower) is, as we know from ancient dramatic literature, very ancient and was accompanied by gambols at the swing (Hindola), very picturesquely described by Rajasekhara (circa 9th century) in his Karpura-manjari (ii. 30). It is quite possible that the Vasanta and the Hindola ragas were melodies specially associated with the spring festivals… In this way, the Megha-raga may have become the 'proper melody' of the rainy season, the Vasanta probably became the 'proper melody' of spring. Hindola, which literally, means 'the swing', was, probably associated with, the primeval non-Aryan 'Festival of Swing', and, was, later, appropriated by, and affiliated with, the 'Dolotsava', or 'Dola-yatra', or the Jhulana festival of the Krishna-Radha cult, one of the most popular religious festivals in the North-west. Bhairava (Bhairon) was, probably, related to some festival connected with the worship of Siva, formerly held in the month of Asvina (September-October) but now amalgamated with the worship of Durga (Saradiya Puja, literally the Autumnal Festival). Sri-raga (lit. meaning Lakshmi, beauty, riches, the pre-

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siding deity of the harvest) may easily be connected with the harvesting season in the winter when the crop is cut, raised and garnered... the melodies Bhairava, Hindola, Vasanta and Sri-raga must have been the oldest primary ragas, originally borrowed from the season festivals... Somesvara is the earliest authority to codify the tradition of allocating the six ragas to the six seasons. According to this authority, quoted in Sangitadarpana (1) Sri-raga is the melody of the Winter (2) Vasanta of the Spring season (3) Bhairava of the summer season (4) Pancama of the Autumn (5) Megha of the Rainy season and (6) Nata-narayana of the early Winter. [10]

Therefore the 'aura' of music remains impregnated with awakened and energized petals of specific psycho-physical chakras of renderer and listeners so as they dwell deep into the divine musico-sphere of rasa and attain the stage of rasanubhuti. The rasanubhuti not only leads to spiritual enlightenment, but also creates perceptions regarding ecological changes like experiencing existence of a season when actually it does not exist. Such experiences can also be had while listening to a recorded piece of music. A record can be compared to a cell of a beehive. Like honey which is created by flowers, music with musical value or rasa gets created by a musician. The way this honey is collected by the honey-bee and is stored in the cells of the beehive, a record like a cell, does the same to preserve this rasa of music in it. The way human beings extract honey from the hive, eat and enjoy it, the playing of records similarly disseminates the recorded music with its authenticity and authority and also creates the same aura as existed during the live performance. Even listeners of this recorded music do experience the same rasanubhuti if they join the musico-sphere so created by being its principal constituents. Interestingly, even today many recording companies in India market their products of Indian Classical Music under titles like "Evening Ragas", "Morning Ragas" and "Afternoon Ragas" etc. with a view to provide listeners with opportunities to enjoy such time-based ragas by playing these recorded pieces at appropriate prescribed time.

Secondly, Benjamin's observations were made in the 1930's. This was the period when the Indian recording industry was in the third decade of its existence and the market was flooded with breakable 78 R.P.M. records and no one in India could have imagined that by now a number of such records will be lost to history due to non-preservation and its breakable nature. Today we are left with some 78 R.P.M. records representing a few rare recordings of a handful of great masters whose same or similar numbers are hardly available. Some of these mechanically reproduced discs perhaps are the only piece representing an artist, the only remainders of the original rendering. Many of these three-minute "78s" of old masters are universally admired as it is said that the old masters have squeezed the essence of a raga into three minutes, and what we get to hear are prefect miniatures of ragas. Rather than contributing to "tremendous shattering of tradition" as a consequence of mechanical reproduction, these single pieces of great masters are testimonies of a grand tradition which existed once and but for their presence could had been lost or would have continued only as a fabulous story.

These masterpieces therefore are the demonstration pieces of some of our great musical talents. They could come in handy in recreating the gharanedar gayaki of old schools and will also remind us of the musical wizardry of these great names. Though the artists have perished, their 'canned' music goes on, its authority, authenticity and aura defying the hypothesis of Benjamin.

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A chance browsing of junk in a kabadi shop some twenty years ago turned casual music lover Amar Nath Sharma into a keen researcher of the history of sound recording in India. BAJANAAMA goes beyond the history of the recording of Hindustani music, it presents the social, cultural, economic backdrop in which this development took place; as also its impact on the history of music within the Indian sub-continent.

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